00066886

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 05 October, 2018

STUDIES
IN
RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

STUDIES

IN

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

BY

ERNEST RENAN

AUTHORIZED ENGLISH EDITION.

66886

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.
1886.

[*All Rights Reserved.*]

290
Ren/Stu
66886

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	1
EXPERIMENTAL METHOD APPLIED TO RELIGION	23
PAGANISM	33
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY	49
FIRST WORKS ON BUDDHISM	57
NEW WORKS ON BUDDHISM	138
THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE	168
THE TEAZIEHS OF PERSIA	183
JOACHIM DI FLOR AND THE ETERNAL GOSPEL	210
FRANCIS OF ASSISI	305
A MONASTIC IDYL OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY	330
RELIGIOUS ART	367

PAGE

THE CONGREGATIONE 'DE AUXILIIS' - - 380

A WORD UPON GALILEO'S TRIAL - - - 406

PORT-ROYAL - - - - - 415

SPINOZA - - - - - - 453

NEW STUDIES

OF

RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

TWENTY-SEVEN years ago I published, under the title of 'Studies of Religious History,' a series of essays relating to the various creeds of antiquity, of the Middle Ages and of the East. The following are essays which may be considered as a sequel to those which were favourably received in 1857. In the present work, I but incidentally dwell upon Greek and Latin antiquity; to compensate for which I submit a lengthy work upon Buddhism, and some minute discussions relative to mediæval questions.

My work on Buddhism was composed in the latter months of the life of Eugène Burnouf. It was intended for the *Revue des deux Mondes*, and was indeed the first contribution I sent to

that review. M. Buloz, of all men the least *Buddhistic*, praised me regarding some accessories; but, respecting the body of the work, declined to believe the truth of the assertions it contained. To him, a real Buddhist in flesh and blood appeared quite inadmissible. In the face of all the proofs I adduced in support of my thesis, he obstinately replied: 'It is impossible that people could be so stupid.' Burnouf died, and my essay remained in my desk. I now bring it to light because I consider that the absence of Buddhism left a gap in my studies of religious history. To the analysis of Burnouf's views, I have added the splendid results more recently achieved by some young and indefatigable searchers, particularly M. Senart.

Nearly all the essays in this volume that have to do with the Middle Ages relate to the extraordinary movement of religious reform which fills the thirteenth century, and, under the pressure of official orthodoxy, disappears in the fourteenth or fifteenth. The centre of the revolutionary agitation was the order of St. Francis; but the history of the Franciscan sect is unintelligible, if one does not, beforehand, form an idea of Joachim di Flor, since Joachim, though not the creation of the excited imagination of the Franciscans, as M. Preger has lately maintained, became for them a subject of legends, a precursor for the most part apocryphal. I have again taken up the work I published in 1866 on this point of criticism, and

have completed it with the help of all that within the last few years has appeared on the subject.

The article on Francis of Assisi sums up all my ideas upon a subject which I should have been delighted to treat at greater length. This essay appeared in the midst of the controversies raised by my 'Life of Jesus,' and I meant it as an answer to certain objections. It was welcomed by some; at least, it earned for me a warrant of indulgence which, I hope, will some day be reckoned in my behalf, like the favours of the Portiuncula. A Capuchin friar, who often talked about me to the Princess ——, having read the article in the *Débats*, said to her: 'He wrote about Jesus otherwise than he should have done; but he has spoken well of St. Francis. St. Francis will save him.' In fact, I have always felt great devotion for Francis of Assisi, whom, of all men after Jesus, I regard as possessing the most purely natural religion. An eminent critic, M. Scherer, often wondered at my liking for that mendicant, a liking so thoroughly opposed to sound ideas of political economy. The reason of it is that in history, as in real life, sympathies proceed a great deal more from community of defects than from that of merits. The defects that would soon have ruined the work of Francis of Assisi, if, by giving it a wrong direction, the universal Church had not endowed it with consistency and durability, are really the same that have limited my own action upon my contempora-

ries to amusing them for the moment. In order to produce anything lasting, an idealist must have an intriguer for *alter ego*. I never had a brother Elias. To have succeeded in the temporal world I must have been governed by some very selfish force that would have worked me to its advantage. Like the patriarch of Assisi, I have lived in this world without any serious interest in it; as a mere tenant, if I may say so. Without having possessed anything of our own, we both found ourselves wealthy. God gave us the usufruct of the universe, and we have been contented to enjoy without possession. Such dispositions will only develop into doubtful conservatives and very harmless revolutionaries. The abuses which offend me, for instance, are rather those which prevent enjoyment than those which affect property. A barrier forbidding access to some beautiful valley, a stream polluted for the benefit of some factory, a wall marking as private property some spot or other of God's unlimited realm, all which turns the beautiful into individual estate, which makes truth a personal possession, all this is repugnant to me, for it all means diminishing the general happiness. The common pastures, which form the 'domain of the evangelical poor,' are thereby reduced. Yet, it is evident that those who believe there are here below 'abiding cities,' will regard as dangerous this way of imitating the birds of the air. Benighted admirers of the Sermon on the Mount, we ask no civic reward for having been nourished

on a chimera. Not only have we done no service to the cause of order, but, perchance, many a rebel, in his revolt against that established order, has found support in our views. We have in nowise contributed to consolidate anybody's property; we are, therefore, in nowise entitled to the gratitude of the citizen of the future.

Religious history grows indeed strange blossoms, and its heroes are mostly in poor health. The study of Christine of Stommeln offers an interesting case of mystic pathology, as well as a touching love-story. I believe that if some young student from the 'Ecole des Chartes' made up his mind to extract the love-letters contained in the 'Bollandists,' revise the text, and hit upon the exact rendering, he might make an exceedingly agreeable little work.

The saints of Port Royal were not haunted by the hallucinations that distracted the poor visionary of the Middle Ages. They were correct in their convulsions; reasonable in their hysterics. In this volume will be found three Studies which I have dedicated to them. As a sequel, I have added the speech I was called upon to deliver at the Hague, at the time of the second centenary of the death of Spinoza. In my opinion, Spinoza belongs a great deal more to religious than to philosophical history. He has his own church rather than his own school—a church full of crude, glaring light, like all the structures of the sixteenth century—cold because it has too many

windows, melancholy because it is too transparent. Greece alone knew how to give cheerfulness, colour, warmth, and life to religion.

For want of cheerfulness, theology sometimes provokes ridicule. The *'Provinciales'* are immortal comedies, whose only fault is that they succeeded too well; it is the only instance in which comedy has been known to correct the defect which it attacked. To lighten the austerity of this volume, I have inserted in it a *jeu d'esprit* which, on leaving the Seminary of St. Sulpice, was inspired in me by recollections of scholastic theology. Its subject is the famous *Congregationes de auxiliis divinæ gratiæ*, which brought about the interminable controversies of Jansenism. In this little sketch, my object has been to point out one of the peculiarities of Romish theology, viz., the grotesque association of pretensions to infallibility with the most subtle quibbles. Infallibility ought, at least, not to admit of disputes. Is there, indeed, anything more ridiculous than wearing one's self out to discover the truth, when it has been agreed beforehand that whatever one decides must be true?

The essay at the beginning of this book was composed under circumstances with which I acquaint my friends, whenever I wish to provoke a smile, and which I certainly recollect with pleasure, since through them I, for one day, became the collaborator of MM. Taine, Max Müller, and Emerson. I wrote it, persuaded that no one in

France would ever read it. M. Taine, I believe, did the same; the result was a volume which had a brisker sale than the majority of those which are written for a public secured in advance. The movements of the Mahdi have since strengthened me in the idea that in Asia and Africa religious experiments of the highest interest could easily be made with a sum not exceeding twenty or thirty millions of francs.

In publishing, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, this continuation of my first 'Studies,' I am happy to notice considerable progress in the public mind. Enlightened opinion has still preserved the eagerness with which it then followed those researches; but it now displays more moderation and more maturity. The maledictions which my first essays drew down would not now be understood. Some positions for which I was anathematized, at the beginning of my career, are now adopted by writers who claim to remain Catholic. Time is the necessary collaborator of reason. The main point is to know how to wait. In reproducing in this work a few pages which, years ago, I wrote about Galileo, my object has been to make this understood. Galileo was, as regards truth, the greatest man that ever lived; he was courageous; yet he was not a hero, and he was right not to be one. People sometimes wonder why Galileo showed weakness, why he consented to retract as erroneous propositions which he knew to be true. It was that he per-

ceived his death would in nowise serve to further the demonstration of those certainties. Martyrdom is only suffered when we wish to prove that about which we are uncertain. Had the systems in support of which poor Giordano Bruno suffered himself to be burnt in the Campo di Flora been as undeniable as those of Galileo, he, most likely, would not have deemed it necessary to assert them at the cost of his life. The theorems of Archimedes would not have gained anything by Archimedes' death. When we hold the truth, further exertions are useless. Truth does not require to be proclaimed; its exposition is sufficient.

Thus methods which, thirty years ago, all formalists conspired to denounce as idle and dangerous, have now become laws for all sound minds. That in the world accessible to man's experience no supernatural fact takes place, is a truth which imposes itself more and more on the conscience of mankind. Men nowadays pray less and less,* for they know that no prayer was ever effective. Evidence proves nothing in a question of this sort. If ever there were a deity whose power was established by documents apparently irrefutable, it was the goddess *Rabbat Tanit*, of Carthage. Nearly three thousand stelæ† bearing

* I take the word 'prayer' in the ordinary acceptation of request offered to Heaven with some special aim, not in the meaning of meditation, of inward dwelling on the abstract principles of duty.

† Monolithic slabs or columns used in ancient times as memorials.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

witness to vows made to that goddess have been excavated—they are now for the most part preserved in the National Library of Paris; each and all state that *Rabbat Tanit* 'heard the prayers' addressed to her. These three thousand witnesses to a prayer having secured its object certainly deceived themselves. For, indeed, *Rabbat Tanit*, being a false deity, never could grant anyone's prayer. The efficacy of quinine is proved because, in numberless cases, quinine or its substitutes have modified the course of a fever. Did ever prayer secure such proofs? Certainly not. Yet the fact is easy to test, for millions of prayers are daily offered to Heaven.

How will the future reconcile these truths, already established, with the need man feels of bowing before an Ideal Superior? It is difficult to say; yet in such matters what we have to do is evident, though the theory is obscure. From liberty alone proceeds the practice of religion. Religion must eventually become entirely free; that is, it must be placed beyond the interference of the State, and be as individual a thing as literature, art, or taste. If, perchance, under the pretext of religion, offences should be committed against common rights, laws exist to punish them. If there were no more laws to govern religious matters than there now are to restrict the dress, studies, or private amusements of citizens, that would be perfection. A State neutral as regards religion is the only one that will never be brought to play the part of persecutor.

Though such a state of things be very remote from us, that is no reason why we should not aspire to it; for, in human pursuits, it is equally wrong to have no ideal, and to believe one's ideal susceptible of immediate attainment. As a matter of fact, the ideal of liberty of which we now speak is more than half realized in France, since with us no religion is imposed upon citizens; a Frenchman may enjoy all civic and political rights without belonging to this or that sect, without even professing any religious belief.

No doubt a further step remains to be made. It would consist in putting an end to the Concordat and striking out from the general budget all grants in aid of particular forms of worship. This reform, than which nothing could be more logical, will certainly work itself out; for, despite many contrary signs, I feel convinced that the future of Europe belongs to liberty. The State, being, according to modern conceptions, a simple guarantee of order for the exercise of individual activity, is no more justified in keeping up Concordats with religions, than with romanticism, or realism, or classicism, or any other opinion that may lawfully be held or not held. But the abandonment of Concordats would imply that we already had a good law of association, regulating the foundation and the legal existence of unions of persons for moral purposes. And such a law is not only wanting, but the Democratic party does not seem at all disposed to vote for it. It is in

England or in the most liberal States of Northern America that we should seek for the type of such a law. Neither the anti-Clerical Democrats nor the Catholic party will hear of such a solution. The programme of the anti-Clerical party is the suppression of the privileges of the clergy, without, in exchange, granting them the liberty of organizing themselves in their own way. The Catholic party claims all the privileges of the Napoleonic Concordat, without accepting any of its duties. It wants to be free, as in America, and official, as it always used to be in France. One cannot, at the same time, enjoy the benefit of an exceptional statute and of the common law. If liberty of association were established in France to-morrow, it should be stipulated that the provisions of such law would not apply to any corporation which had formed special Concordats with the State, or to any college which conferred upon its members even the appearance of State functionaries. Upon their renouncing the benefits of their Concordats religious creeds should enjoy the common law. With time they would be brought to understand that liberty for all is also the best and the safest of charters.

Everything considered, our actual state of religious legislation, however incoherent, grants sufficient liberty to all. Those who do not belong to the so-called creed of the majority have nothing to complain of. As for Catholicism, it is wrong, I think, to proclaim itself persecuted. The truth

is, it is privileged; and privileges must entail corresponding duties. *Qui sentit commodum debet sentire et incommodum.* The concordatory organization admits only dioceses and parishes; in such a state of things, religious congregations cannot exist save by the authorization of the State. This is illiberal; this is quite contrary to liberty, as we understand it, and as we wish it. We desire a legislation allowing everybody to dress, to lodge, and to live as he thinks fit. But the first step in that direction would be to abandon the Concordat, since the Concordat is itself the negation of the theory of the State, understood as a protector of liberties and a stranger to all religious or literary opinions. The ties which bind Catholicism are, in reality, the ties of its privileges—ties which eighty years ago it was so delighted to form, and which to-day it is not at all anxious to sever.

The present state of our religious legislation is therefore very tolerable, and the times we live in not being suited for great reforms, we must not urge fundamental changes, which might carry with them serious inconvenience. For the present, a modification of details will be sufficient. In our actual legal system, liberal principles appear to me to be seriously infringed only as regards educational obligations. The State has a right to teach in every branch, on condition that no one should be compelled to follow its teaching. Some of the provisions actually in force respecting

examinations to be undergone by children who do not attend public schools may become highly vexatious. The obligation imposed upon the father to give elementary instruction to his children does not necessitate preventive measures. It is also the father's duty to give his children proper and sufficient nourishment, yet no surveillance over him ascertains how he fulfils that duty.

A comparison will explain my meaning. Every commune possesses its public fountain, where water can be had gratis. No one, however, is bound to avail himself of the advantage thus offered. Any of the inhabitants would even be perfectly free to say: 'The water from the public fountain is very injurious; come and take water from my well;' and his fellow-citizens would have a right to accept his invitation. But if the owner of the well were afterwards to say: 'You see now, everybody prefers the water of my well; do away with the public fountain, and give me the money that is spent in keeping it up,' he should be plainly told: 'No; public institutions must not impede individual efforts, but they must not be dependent upon private will or action.'

The best guarantee of liberty is the general progress of enlightenment. If we consider the whole of Europe, such progress is indubitably real. We may yet see strong religious reactions; we shall never see a return to fanaticism. Fanaticism is only possible to the faith of the masses. Such faith is much weakened, and it is improbable

that, even in the face of great social disasters, it will ever be rekindled to any appreciable extent. Let us suppose the most fearful misfortunes; it would even then be hard to persuade the people that such misfortunes were caused by persons who did not go to mass, and that they should therefore be attacked. Supernatural beliefs will slowly die out, undermined by primary instruction and by the predominance of scientific over literary education. These influences are not the result of any political *régime*, of true or false theories spread abroad by publicists; they are the consequence of the progress of modern societies towards a state wherein the individual, in order to live, requires a certain positive instruction. Of yore the peasant, unable to read, write, or calculate, still lived, protected by patronage and by a kind of patriarchal spirit, generally diffused. Nowadays the struggle for life dooms to starvation any individual placed in such conditions. Similarly, the man who has gone through his Greek and Latin studies, but has neglected geography, the elements of science, modern languages, will find himself not so well prepared for the struggle of life as one whose education has been more modern, not so refined, perhaps, yet more practical. Classical education will ensure superiority only to those who wish to write; that is, to a very limited number.

But the ordinary and common education, which will become that of the masses, will be less con-

servative of spiritual belief than the old complacent classicism, which cared little whether a sentence was true or not, so long as it was well turned. Men who have not been to the university at all throw off supernatural notions more readily than those who have had an incomplete literary education; for the latter have been brought up to admire exclusively the seventeenth century, and, in most cases, their masters have not had sufficient strength of mind to point out the essential distinction between the excellent type of prose style created by the seventeenth century and the intellectual childishness too often displayed in the literary productions of that period. A man is valued now in proportion to what he knows; and the best writers of the seventeenth century knew very little, and can teach us scarcely anything. Historical sciences were then hardly born; the great natural sciences existed only in the brain of some rare genius. A schoolboy of to-day, with his textbook, knows a great deal more than Bossuet respecting a crowd of topics of the first importance. Our new system of education will make generations not so cultured, perhaps, but more enlightened than those who owe their habit of mind to a classical education. It is the fault of classical education which has failed to lead its students to put on the *toga virilis* in earnest, and assert their intellectual majority by dethroning literature and substituting for it the positive culture of the human mind. In such conditions, superstition

will still no doubt dispose of very great forces; but it will then be little more than a social inconvenience. Fanaticism, which three centuries ago was able to overwhelm a great country like Spain, is now but a vanquished Typhon, powerless to do harm.

We must be prepared to consider calmly the events which, a few years hence, will brutally assail our closing century. The aim of human life will ever be holy. If it is true that henceforth intellectual culture, even in its humblest degree, will exclude supernatural belief, it is equally true that the highest culture will never uproot religion understood in its loftiest meaning. Man is not dependent upon some capricious master, who makes him live, die, prosper, or suffer indifferently. But he is dependent on the whole universe, which has an aim, and which makes everything converge towards that aim. Man is a subordinate being; whatever he may do, he worships, he serves. To contribute readily and joyfully to the supreme good, is virtue. To serve ungracefully, to imitate indifferent soldiers who, though they go into action like the rest, are constantly grumbling against their chiefs, is evil. It might be proved that the worst of men co-operates with providential views by his unconscious action more than he thwarts them by his revolt and his misdeeds.

Indeed, the sermon of St. Francis of Assisi to the birds is the *résumé* of all good theology: 'Swallows, my little sisters, you are under very

great obligations to God your Maker, and at all times you should praise Him, because He has given you freedom to fly everywhere, and because He has provided you with a double and treble garment, and chiefly because of the element of air to which He has destined you. You neither sow nor reap; yet God feeds you, and He has made the streams and the fountains to slake your thirst; He gave you the mountains and the valleys as a shelter, and the high trees in which to build your nests; and although you know neither how to spin nor how to sow, God has furnished you with garments for yourselves and for your young ones; whereby we see how much your Maker loves you. Therefore beware, my little sisters, of the sin of ingratitude, and devote yourselves for ever to praising God. . .' Here is the truth. The world is a vast choir, wherein each of us has a part to sustain. Religion consists for everyone of us in singing while we do our work, in praising God from morning to night by cheerfulness, good humour, and patience.

As St. Francis of Assisi very truly remarked, the bird is in that respect favourably situated, for singing is natural to it, and it is free from the cares of a complicated existence. Yet we may all in various degrees imitate it for some part of our time. First of all, women, to raise themselves to pure worship, have but to consult their inner selves, to listen to the inward voice of their sex, that sex being in itself a kind of merciful pro-

fession, an everlasting act of piety. Woman is religious by simply observing the proprieties of her state. The robe and girdle of women are the insignia of an order; they are garments of holiness. Man has also his ejaculatory, manly prayer, which, being raised from the hottest of the fray of life, pierces heaven with short, abrupt, and uncouth accents. We pray as soon as we cease to be selfish; and man is not always selfish. If he sometimes grumbles at Providence, it is because he does not think it sufficiently just. His very reproach is often an act of faith; his railings at any rate are more agreeable to the Eternal than the hypocritical homage of a bigot. Youth is fiery; it darts diamond-pointed arrows, like that of the seraph who pierced St. Theresa's heart. Even at the age when we mark in white the days on which we do not suffer, there is the dream (sad way of worshipping for want of any other); there are old remnants of ardour, extinguished fires still warm, some secret belief that even the depth of night, as recent explorers have ascertained regarding the depths of the ocean, is perhaps not without warmth and life.

Everything considered, there are few situations in the vast field of existence, on the surface of this big iron ball which is called the planet Earth, wherein the balance of debit and credit does not leave a little surplus of happiness. And this at a period of the world's history when God, if He were autocratic, would be regarded, when judged

by His government, as a Sovereign of limited intelligence and little justice. How much easier will hearty adherence, homage, and praise become when reason more widely rules the world, when, evil being more thoroughly vanquished, good becomes stronger; when the number of beings for whom life is a baneful gift grows insignificant!

Everybody will then, from the bottom of his heart, follow the solitary voice of the priest when he sings at mass: *Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere.* Life for everyone, as for the birds of St. Francis of Assisi, will overflow with love and gratitude. Melancholy and saddening dogmas will not find any more believers. The joy of life, now so often obliterated by suffering, will break out everywhere. Nihilism, caused by the frightful mass of misery which centuries upon centuries of violence and harshness have engendered in the midst of our old continent, will disappear, or rather, will have no reason to exist. When the world becomes better, when gaiety reigns in Russia, as, in good times, it reigns in Burgundy or in Normandy, heroic protests will be needless: men will no longer be atheists out of pity, destroyers out of a spirit of justice, criminals out of the love of good; the most fanatic adherents of nihilism will become the best soldiers of the ideal. May we see, before we die, some signs of the dawn of these happy days!

My joy, in the decline of my life, is to think that I have contributed something to this desirable

end. As I never wrote with the intention of causing this or that solution to prevail by the skill of an advocate, but rather always endeavoured loyally to provoke the free judgment of my reader by placing before him the elements of the question, I am confident that, even when mistaken, I have been useful. I have served my adversaries as well as my adherents, and if some day catholic studies rise again, it will, I hope, be acknowledged that I have contributed to that result. If, on the contrary, supernatural beliefs, consummating their divorce from rational methods, abandon more and more the field of the human mind, it may not have been useless that a serious and well-meaning inquiry has been made into an order of ideas which is perhaps doomed to lose its importance, but which was everything in the past. Indeed, religious history possesses this advantage, that it would still be necessary, even in case religion itself were to disappear. Though we disbelieve the mythology of the Homeric poems, we nevertheless are delighted to read them. The lessons of morality given by religious systems need but a simple transposition to become very sound philosophy; or rather, is it not we who, from our own old stock of kindness and instinctive devotion, have lent to Christianity that excellent moral philosophy for which we give it credit? Christianity has made us, no doubt; but we also have made Christianity. And so in endeavouring to gather, outside the particular dogmas of churches,

the elements of rational piety, we are only re-assuming our property wherever we find it.

Dogmas pass away, but piety is eternal. St. Nil adapted the maxims of Epictetus to the requirements of Christian life. I sometimes form a similar though infinitely more modest project. Some persons having expressed to me their satisfaction with certain passages in my writings, and having found them capable of edifying and consoling, I should like to extract such passages from the volumes in which they are contained, and to publish them in a little book, under the name of *Pious Readings*. I would divide them into fifty-two parts, for the fifty-two Sundays in the year. For each Sunday there would be an extract from the Gospel and from the Fathers of the Spiritual Life, a prayer and a spiritual bouquet, after the manner of St. Francis de Sales; later on, illustrations might be added. But for certain omissions, a pious woman would not notice any difference between such a book and the Prayer-book which she carries with her to church. Perhaps she might end by, in some respects, preferring it.

This would be a glorious victory. I will not deny that, of all books, the one of which I am most envious is the Mass-book. It certainly contains many sublime things. It must, however, be granted that its success has been singular and out of all proportion to its intrinsic value. To deserve to be thus lovingly read in the hours of meditation and solitude, to enjoy the incomparable privilege

of receiving the unguarded looks of woman, at the time when she thinks herself alone in the presence of her Maker, the Prayer-book should be a web of the purest and costliest texture. But nothing of the kind. This little book, which so many exquisite beings clasp with a fervent hand, and at times press to their lips, contains weaknesses, errors, things that maintain in woman the unfortunate habit of too often countenancing and accepting absurdities. Those lines, upon which so many charming eyes are fixed with a kind of loving intensity, are often almost meaningless. A great step would be made on the day when we could place in woman's hand a devotional book less imperfect. Far from me be the thought of undertaking so delicate a work, in which one could succeed only by a combination of talent, tenderness, and simplicity. I would only gather, in a small-sized book, a few sincere thoughts, for the benefit of those for whom the old missal no longer suffices. My last ambition will be gratified, if I may hope to enter a church after my death, in the shape of a small 18mo. book, bound in black morocco, held between the long and slender fingers of an elegantly gloved hand.

EXPERIMENTAL METHOD APPLIED TO RELIGION.

An Oriental once said to me: 'You Europeans will never fully understand religions, because you have never beheld the birth of any. As for us, we daily see some fresh one rising in our midst.' Indeed, all the leading religions of the world began in Asia. And this creative activity cannot be said to be exhausted. Even in our days, active sects have appeared in Asia. *Bâbism*, which is far from having achieved its destinies, is quite a recent phenomenon. We cannot absolutely deny that some great religious cyclones, kinds of *Islamism*, substituting a fresh *Koran* for that of Mahomet, may yet develop themselves in Asia. A man sufficiently conversant with Arabic to write in a fine style a book purporting to define Adam's religion, might expect to see it adopted by the tribes bordering on Syria. These tribes, whose ways and customs are still what they were twelve hundred years ago, might easily be persuaded that Mahomet was a great man for having re-discovered the religion of Abraham, but that the religion of Adam is superior, since it applies

to the whole of Adam's posterity—that is, to mankind without exception. Fireworks let off on the mountain of Safet, and backed up by a few millions of francs, might easily be passed off as the apparition of the Messiah; confirmatory evidence might be procured by a sufficiently generous treatment of the Jews of Tiberias and Safet. By a rapid *coup de main*, Mecca might be taken, and the Caaba dismantled and turned into a receptacle for refuse.

In a word, with about fifty millions of francs, the equivalent of what, twelve hundred and fifty years ago, was achieved by Mahomet could be performed in our days; Islam would thus be ruined, and a new religion founded, lasting as long as anything can last, which in the course of a hundred years would prove its divinity by miracles, martyrs, etc.

The experiment might, after all, be worth trying. Yes, a millionnaire willing to devote his fortune to the attempt might, without leaving Paris, have the pleasure of again arousing the religious enthusiasm of Asia. He could, while dining at Brebant's with his friends, have telegrams forwarded to him respecting the exploits of his disciples, the heroic virtues displayed by them, the manner in which, in the course of the day, they had been tearing their own flesh with iron hooks. I would advise him to make his religion very difficult, that it might be all the more attractive; very absurd, that it might the more readily be proclaimed of

divine origin. In the meantime, the impartial observer would have rich opportunities of laughing or weeping at the incurable foolishness of mankind and its inexhaustible goodness.

The new religion would not require great doctrinal originality. A Persian friend of mine, who long resided in France, told me that, upon his return to Persia, he was, in spite of himself, on the point of becoming the founder of a new religion. A sort of legend preceded him, to which he vainly endeavoured to put a stop; the rumour of the miracles he was alleged to have performed distracted him to such an extent that he sometimes wondered whether it were not true. His motto was, 'Liberty, equality, fraternity;' people to whom he communicated these three sacramental words fell on their knees struck with amazement. They used to say they were much more sublime than the Koran, and that the Divine Spirit alone was capable of revealing such lofty things.

The cause of this peculiar superiority of Asia, in the matter of religious creations, is to be found in certain faculties with which Asia is richly gifted, and in which we ourselves are almost wholly wanting. Asia possesses enthusiasm, faith, an easily inflamed imagination, a boundless hope, audacious deceit, and, in extreme cases, when the holy cause is driven to bay, that imperturbable assurance which maintains an idea in spite of reality. Our races are infinitely more solid, serious, straightforward than those of Asia; but,

for these very reasons, they draw back horrified at what appears to them an imposture; they are not light enough to be so lifted up; they are deficient in that sort of double dealing which enables one to be, at the same time, fanatical and shrewd, cunning and credulous, impostor and dupe. We are too honest to persist in such wild undertakings: were we to try, we should fancy that people laughed at us. This reminds me of that good Vulfilaïc of Trèves, of whom Gregory of Tours* speaks; it seems that he tried, on the banks of the Mosel, to imitate the Stylites of Syria, and live upon a column. The sensible bishops made him understand that such a feat could not be performed by a barbarian like him; that, being but a peasant, he must not attempt to imitate the superior beings who succeeded at Antioch and Chalcis.

To the already enumerated causes which, in the East, act as stimulants to new religions, we must also add the enthusiastic craving for martyrdom. Religions are founded by martyrs. Indeed, Eastern races seem to find in tortures endured for their faith a sort of fierce delight. It is no rare occurrence in Asia to see people become believers in order to enjoy the supreme pleasure of suffering death for their creed. While the long rows of Bâbist martyrs slowly moved through the streets of Teheran like a living conflagration,†

* Hist. eccl. franc., v. 15.

† The miserable creatures carried lighted tapers stuck in every part of their body.

persons, till then strangers to the sect, would rush from their houses and join the dreadful procession of the unfortunate sufferers, so as to be tortured with them.

This religious incapacity of Europe is the cause of the long torpor in which, for centuries, pagan mythologies vegetated. Next to nothing is known concerning the religions of the Iberic race; yet to say that they were, morally, little productive, is probably not going too far. Indo-European mythology, introduced in the West by the Greeks, the Italians, the Celts, the Germans, brought about in Greece a marvellous development of the plastic arts; but it was almost sterile in moral effect. Gods formed from Nature by primitive intuitions, highly poetic, yet devoid of moral sense, could not exercise any beneficial influence upon morals.

Hence arose the grotesque phenomenon of populations kept in religious inferiority, when these same populations had already attained the highest degree of perfection in art, literature, science, politics, and theories of social organization. Umbrian and Latin forms of worship never rose above a coarse formalism, which left no room for any tender feeling between the god and the man. Orphism and Mysteries were in Greece fruitless attempts to foster devotion and piety.

Celtic Druidism more resembles the great religious reforms that in the East bore the names of Moses, of Zoroaster, of Buddha; still Druidism is not sufficient to give the religion of the Celts any

superiority over that of other Western nations. When, towards the middle of the second century, Christianity made its sudden appearance at Lyons, at Vienne, in the heart of Gaul, among the Segusiani and the Allobroges, it was enthusiastically welcomed. All lofty and susceptible souls accepted it. Christianity appearing suddenly in the midst of this religious degradation, produced the same effect as civilization does when contrasted with barbarism. Our races, with natural piety, were soon charmed; they adopted Christianity with all their spiritual strength; that religion became, in some way, national to our ancestors; so much so that, later on, they imagined it was the very offspring of their hearts, their treasure, their own personal creation.

In so thinking, our ancestors did not absolutely deceive themselves. Certainly, Christianity is, in its origin, a pure Oriental production, an offshoot from Judaism; that is, a purely Semitic religion. But in adopting it the West made it its own. St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Elizabeth of Thuringia, Joan of Arc, are much more closely related to our old ancestors of the Gallic or German forests than to David, Esther, or the authors of the Talmud. Our Breton or Irish saints, a St. Iltudus, a St. Cadoc, a St. Columba, bear a closer resemblance to the Druids than to St. Peter or St. Paul. In adopting Christianity European races imparted to it both their defects and their virtues. Their virtues were unusual

depth of feeling, extreme love of nature, overflowing imagination, which threw all the dyes of the rainbow, all the hues of our fresh fountains over the dry austerity of Palestinian Messianism. Their defect was superstition. The Celtic and Italian races were perhaps the most superstitious of all races. In becoming Christian, they did not cease to be superstitious. If ever there was a religion free from any coarse dross it was that of the first Christian generation. Transplanted to polytheistic races, that religion, originally so pure, became veritable paganism. The Christians of the time of Gregory of Tours would have inspired St. Paul with horror. The famous letter of Pope Gregory the Great* elevated into a principle the concessions which must, of necessity, be made to barbarism:

'When you meet our brother Augustine, tell him that, having long considered within myself the matter of the English, I think that it is not necessary to destroy their temples, but only the idols therein. You must provide yourselves with holy water, with which to sprinkle the pagan shrines; you must erect altars upon which you will place relics; for, if those temples are strongly built, they must pass from devil-worship to the service of the true God, in order that the nation, seeing we preserve the places to which it is accustomed, may the more readily come there. And because they have been accustomed to kill many oxen as sacri-

* Epist. S. Greg., ix. 71.

fices to devils, festivals should be organized on the occasion of the dedication of churches or of the commemoration of martyrs. Let them hang garlands round their temples turned into churches, and let them celebrate such festivals with modest repasts. Instead of immolating animals to demons, let them kill such animals and eat them, rendering thanks to God who feeds them, so that, by allowing them some material pleasures, they may the more easily be brought to share in spiritual joys; for it is impossible to expect savage minds to give up all their customs at once. A mountain cannot be ascended with one leap; it must be climbed step by step.'

When we explore a remote spot of Normandy or Brittany, and stop before each of the shrines consecrated to local saints, and learn from the peasantry the special healing powers of each of such saints—this one protecting sheep against giddiness, that one setting the broken legs of donkeys, another curing children of hooping-cough —we remember legions of Gallic gods whose functions were quite similar, and we are led to believe that, among the lower orders, religion has undergone but little modification. But in higher classes the beneficial action of Christianity reveals itself. Christianity, Greece, and Rome, these are the three elements which, added to the qualities of our old Celtic and Germanic races, were the factors of European civilization. Without the Semitic element, introduced by Christianity,

something would have been wanting in the foundations of our intellectual and moral culture. Paganism would never have succeeded in instituting the Church, the congregation of the faithful, the Sabbath, the Lord's Supper, preaching, the sacraments, the Bible. Above all, the Bible, that book so thoroughly Semitic, which has become the universal reading-book of the West, is the great sign which shows the religious privilege of the Hebrew people, and the providential decree which appointed the green and fresh pastures of the West to be, as regards religion, the appanage of the children of Shem.

By modifying the ideas of all cultured people respecting the supernatural, that is, respecting the manner in which the ideal shows itself in human things, the development of criticism and of the natural sciences has altered the very essence of religion. The pagan, believing in numerous powers who could be worshipped and influenced by means of formulæ and ceremonies strictly carried out; the Jew and the Christian, believing in one sole Monarch of the universe, who is supposed to rule all by decrees formed for some predetermined end, equally disagree with a philosophy the first principle of which is that God is Reason, and, as Malebranche says, never acts in accordance with special designs. Henceforward religion seeks refuge in the heart. It has become poetry and sentiment. And, while dogmas may divide, sentiment reunites. God preserve us from re-

pudiating the beautiful name of Christian, which places us in communion with Jesus and the ideal of the Gospel, with the Church and all the treasures of holiness it has produced. But neither let us disown our naturalistic past. Like that old Frisian king who, having already one foot in the baptismal font, drew it back when the missionary told him that in Paradise he would not meet his noble ancestors, the Frisian kings,* we will not have any more anathema, condemnation, exclusive symbols. In this we are true disciples of Jesus. Jesus was never more divinely a prophet than at Naplouse,† when He said to the woman of Samaria, 'Believe Me, woman, the time will come when men will no longer worship on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, but when true worshippers will worship in spirit and in truth.'

* Acta SS. Ord. S. Bened., iii. 361.

† Or Sichem, a town of Syria, built on the ruins of the Neapolis of the Greeks; famous in the Scriptures as the capital of the kingdom of Samaria.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

PAGANISM.

M. ALFRED MAURY,* already known by excellent works wherein profound erudition is illuminated by sound criticism, has set himself the task of writing a complete history of the religions generally grouped under the name of Paganism. Having helped M. Guigniaut in the vast collection of mythology which that learned Academician gave to France, M. Maury was better fitted than anyone for a work which might have daunted courage less than his. The volume he has just published contains, epoch by epoch, pictures of the religious revolutions of Greece, from primitive times to those of Alexander. It fulfils all the hopes conceived by the friends of serious study. When completed, this work will rank among the writings which have most contributed to the creation of the great science of our century—the philosophical history of the human mind.

Of all the religions professed by civilized peoples, the Greek religion is the least precise and the least fixed. The Pelasgic forms of worship generally

* 'Histoire des Religions de la Grèce antique,' by Alfred Maury, vol. i. (1857).

appear to have been coarse and barbarous. It is surprising that the people who realized, for the first time, the complete type of civilization, should have long remained, in the matter of religion, so far inferior, not only to the Semitic nations, which were in ancient times superior in this respect to the Indo-European peoples, but also to several branches of the Indo-European family, such as those of India, Persia, Phrygia. The extreme difficulty of the study of Greek mythology is precisely due to this character of dogmatic imperfection. The ancient Greeks having possessed no definite rule of faith, their religion, poetically so charming, is, from the standpoint of our theological ideas, but a heap of inconsistent fables, the true sense of which it is difficult to unravel. The new school very properly gives up all hope of finding there anything like deep mysteries or lofty symbolism. It consisted of confused recollections of some ancient worship of nature, traces of primitive sensations, embodied in personages to whom, by playing on words, and I dare say by cock-and-bull stories, similar to those that spring up in a child's fancy, adventures were attributed. A lively, active, and forgetful people composed the exquisite plots of these fables, which, embellished by poetry and by art, became a mythology common to all the peoples of the Græco-Roman world.

Greece never had a sacred book; she never had any symbols, any councils, any sacerdotal caste, organized for the preservation of dogmas. Her

poets and her artists were her true theologians; the idea of the various deities was almost left to the arbitrary conception of the individual. Hence that marvellous freedom which enabled the Greek mind to move spontaneously in all directions, without experiencing the constraint of an inspired text; hence also art, freed from theological control, and having the right to create, according to its fancy, types of the divine world, derived incomparable facilities; but hence also, for religion, arose an unfortunate uncertainty, which left its creed unguided, opened an unlimited career to the fancies of individual devotion, and ended by an incredible overflow of follies and nonsense. In that chaos of inconsistent fables, nothing is more difficult than to grasp the true essence of the Hellenic religion, I mean the aliment which it furnished to the craving for belief. This is the object of M. Maury's researches. He is less occupied with the interpretation of particular myths than with questions relative to worship, morality, and the forms under which the sentiment of piety manifested itself in paganism. To the student, religions present themselves under such numerous aspects, that, to be complete, their history must needs be written from very different points of view. An extensive history of Christian theology could be made without touching upon the history of Christianity as a great social fact; one could exhaust the social history of Christianity without saying one word about Christian

devotion. The same may be said of paganism. Leaving to others the task of extracting the poetical element contained in antique fables, M. Maury confines his labours chiefly to seeking for the feelings which gave rise to them, and the amount of positive religion concealed in them.

In the first two chapters of his book, M. Maury endeavours to unravel the intricate network of the population of Greece, and to bring to light the origin of the Hellenic religion. Though not containing the largest display of the author's personal views, these two chapters are certainly those which, to French readers, present the newest ideas.

In them M. Maury has grouped, with both erudition and judgment, all the results achieved in Germany by comparative philology, within the last few years, upon the subject of the primitive unity of Indo-European religions. These results, scattered through a host of scientific papers, especially in the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* of M. Kuhn, the best philological paper now published, are of the greatest importance to history and philosophy. Is there, indeed, a more striking phenomenon than the occurrence, in the ancient religions of the race which founded civilization from Ceylon to Iceland, of the same resemblance as in their languages? It is to-day an incontestable fact that the most diverse peoples of that great race—the Hindus, the Persians, the Armenians, the Phrygians, the Greeks, the

Italians, the Germanic, Slav, and even Celtic peoples—primitively had the same creed, consisting in the worship of the forces of nature considered as free agents. All the systems which tried to explain Greek mythology as borrowed from Egypt, Judea, Phœnicia, or as based upon symbolic lore, or founded on revealed truths—all such systems, I say, must now be abandoned.* Greek mythology is one of the forms which have clothed, in course of time, and under the influence of local circumstances, that naturalism, of which the Vedas offer the most ancient and the purest type. No doubt the religious patrimony common to all Indo-European people was inconsiderable, if we look only to the number and the philosophical value of the ideas it contained; no doubt every branch of the great race so developed this primitive groundwork as to make it its own—and Greece in particular transformed it by her plastic genius and her delicate taste; but the groundwork remains everywhere the same: wherever the Indo-European race preserves any recollection of its ancient religious state, we meet with an echo, more or less faint, of the sensations which revealed to man the existence of a divine world concealed behind nature.

* Certainly the progress of studies brings us to estimate at a high figure the indebtedness of Greece to Phœnicia in the matter of mythology; nevertheless, in the general view of the Greek religion, the Aryan stock preserves its primitive and generative influence.

How did the human mind extract from that naturalism, so simple in appearance, a vast collection of fables? How did it transform material elements into personages, and myths concerning them into adventures the relation of which to the original signification of the myths is often unrecognisable? This is what modern criticism has often acutely detected. Sometimes the reason of such metamorphosis is quite obvious, as, for instance, when the fire of the domestic hearth (*hestia* or *vesta*), and the subterranean fire (*vulcanus*), become two deities: the former, pure and venerable; the latter, sad and toilsome. At other times the vagaries of popular fancy, and the impossibility experienced by succeeding generations of retaining the sense of a legend, were the cause of strange deviations. Productions of an early age, when man and nature, scarcely distinct one from the other, had, so to speak, but one consciousness, the simple dogmas of primitive religion soon ceased to be understood, and were degraded to the level of fables and romances.

I will quote but one instance of this. The serene and pleasurable emotions awakened by the first rains of spring inspired the ancestors of the Indo-European race with an idea found in the mythologies of nearly all their descendants. Dew fertilizing the ground was conceived as the mysterious union of two deities, Heaven and Earth. 'The pure sky,' says Æschylus, excellent interpreter of the old fables, 'loves to penetrate

the earth; the earth, in its turn, aspires to the union; the rain falling from the amorous sky fecundates the earth, and the earth brings forth for the good of mortals pasturage for the cattle and the gifts of Ceres.' As the imagination of primitive peoples always confused with a sensation the circumstances accompanying it, the bird whose song is heard when the showers of spring refresh the ground, the cuckoo, was involved in the myth, and its sweet and melancholy cry represented to the simple men of early ages the amorous sighs of the divine couple. And do you wish to know what this myth, at the same time charming and sublime, became when interpreted by a less delicate period? An equivocal story, much enjoyed by Aristophanes, to which the people added ridiculous details, and which was the occasion of coarse practices. It was said that Juno, being on Mount Thornax one very cold day, a benumbed cuckoo took refuge in her bosom. The goddess took pity on the bird; but she had scarcely given it shelter, when Jupiter (for it was he) reassumed his natural form. They added that, the goddess having resisted, Jupiter was obliged to promise to wed her.

It is not easy to imagine the frequency of such transformations in antiquity. Greek mythology is, from beginning to end, but a vast misinterpretation, thanks to which the divine forces invented by the rapture of the men of the early ages at the first sight of nature were transformed

into individuals. The same thing occurred in India, and is still going on there. Small-pox and cholera are personified; legends of the great deities are daily subjected, if not to additions, at least to notable modifications as regards the form in which they are presented. Yet nowhere so much as in Brahminic worship is the trace of the primitive worship of nature visible. It is to fire, under the name it bears as an element (*agni, ignis*), that the hymns of the Veda are addressed. The *devas* themselves (*divi, dii*) were not the result of a metaphysical reasoning analogous to that by which monotheism deduces the necessity of a supreme cause: they belong to that class of aërial beings with which the imagination of the primitive Aryan peopled nature—beings conceived as in many respects inferior to man.

It was chiefly in the worship of heroes that variations of religious sentiment had the opportunity of showing themselves, and produced singular results. Heroes are not, as was long believed, deified men: they have the same origin as gods. Nearly always a god and a hero answer to the same allegory, and, under different figures, represent the same phenomenon, the same star, the same meteor. The hero is thus the counterpart of a deity, the dim reflection and, as it were, the parhelion of the splendour of a mighty god. It is true that if we compare the divine legend with the heroic legend, we shall generally find the latter much richer. But the reason of that differ-

ence is quite simple. The hero, being regarded as a man, and having, according to common opinion, left traces of his existence here below, must necessarily have obtained greater popularity and appealed more directly to the feelings of the crowd. It is thus that the saints, in the less enlightened regions of Christianity, occupy a more important place than God Himself, precisely because, being so much inferior to Him, the distance which separates them from mortals is not so insuperable.

It was chiefly at the time when there was an endeavour to draw moral teaching from the pagan religion that the heroes gained in importance and popularity. It cannot indeed be denied that they lent themselves to that kind of teaching far better than the gods. The adventures wherein their virtue, subjected to sore trials, was seen to succumb at times in order to rise afterwards, were proposed by poets as models of resignation and courage. Hercules in particular was made use of for this purpose by those whom we may call the preachers of paganism. Hercules, according to a highly probable hypothesis, which the demonstrations of M. Maury almost raise to the rank of a certainty, was an ancient deity of the air (*Hera-cles*), whose worship, in the hands of the warlike race of the Dorians, assumed an heroic colour, and was transformed, under the influence of poets and philosophers, into a pure moral allegory. This demi-god, like all the other divine

types of the Hellenes, proceeding from the personification of natural elements, but strangely magnified by being confused with the Tyrian Melkarth, eventually became the ideal of human perfection—a kind of saint of whom an edifying biography was made, and by reference to whom it was endeavoured to arouse the sentiment of duty. This may appear incredible, but India furnishes us with many instances of similar transformations. Vishnu, who in Hindu mythology plays a part analogous to that of Hercules, was, at the outset, but the personification of air—an image of the celestial vault lighted up by the sun. Then labours were attributed to him, taken chiefly from the beneficent effects of the sun, and he was transformed into a kind of redeemer devoting himself to the salvation of mankind.

How could such simple intuitions, corresponding originally to nothing philosophical or moral, satisfy during so many centuries and until a period of brilliant civilization, the religious requirements of the most refined races? How, in our day, does a country like India, suffering, it is true, from secular decadence, but where human thought stirs with so much might and originality, cling obstinately, despite Christian and Mussulman teaching, to a religious system which, it would seem, ought not to have outlived the infancy of mankind? Habit, whose influence on religious matters is most decisive, can alone explain so peculiar a phenomenon. Handed down by tradition, those

fables, in spite of their absurdity, spoke to the imagination and to the heart, because they were old. Religious sentiment clings to antiquated dogma, even when it sees such dogma annihilated or refuted. Close to a little town of Brittany, where I spent my childhood, there used to be a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, and containing a highly venerated Madonna. One night a fire broke out in the chapel, and left only the shapeless and charred trunk of the statue. The alms of the faithful soon repaired the poor shrine; a new statue was set upon the altar in place of the old one, which, to avoid destroying it, was put by in some remote corner. This was a sore trial to the simple faith of the neighbouring peasantry. Despite her rich veil and her bright colours, the new Virgin could not command any prayers: their vows were all addressed to the calcined *débris* which had been deprived of its honours. This old, mutilated statue had in the past heard their entreaties and received their confidence in trouble; in their eyes, to pay their homage to another Virgin, because she was new and possessed finer garments, would have been infidelity.

The first duty of criticism, therefore, if it would understand the beliefs of the past, is to take its standpoint in the past. Physical science, on one side, by excluding from nature all that resembles free agents, and monotheism, on the other, by teaching us to consider the world as a sort of machine having no other life but that imparted to

it by the supreme workman, have made it very difficult for us fully to comprehend a religion based upon nature conceived as animated. Yet how many ideas are recorded in religious history, the reason for which escapes ordinary common-sense, but which have fascinated whole sections of mankind! When persons who are only conversant with European affairs are told that Buddhism is a religion without any god, or rather in which the gods (*devas*) are beings of so little consequence that to attain final perfection they are obliged to become men and to owe their salvation to a man, it seems to them inconceivable; yet this is true to the letter, and the religion in question is the one which at this moment has more adherents than any other in the world. As a rule, people do not take a sufficiently comprehensive view of the variety of the productions of the human mind. The comparative study of languages, of literatures, and of religions, in widening the circle of received ideas, will alone bring people to understand under how many different aspects the world has been and may be considered.

It is certain that, according to our way of judging, antiquity, if we except its schools of philosophy, was deficient in one of the elements which we regard as essential to sound reasoning —I mean a clear conception of nature and its unalterable laws. At enlightened periods of the world's history this deficiency was hardly felt; on the contrary, the scientific spirit, which Greece

will have the eternal honour of inaugurating in the world, owed in a certain sense its origin to polytheism. It is, indeed, a fact worthy of notice that the nomad Semitic peoples, who from the beginning appear to have been more or less inclined to monotheism, never had a science or philosophy of their own. Islamism, which is the purest production of Semitic genius, and which may be looked upon as the ideal of monotheism, suppressed all curiosity, all inquiry into first causes. *God is great! God knows!* Such is the answer of the Arab to narratives most likely to provoke his surprise. The Jewish people, though superior in religion to all the peoples of antiquity, also offer no trace of scientific movement previous to their intercourse with Greece. 'From the earliest ages,' says, with much truth, M. Ravaisson,* 'the Hebraic religion, in order to account for nature and for man, had invoked the holy and all-powerful God, the Eternal, anterior and superior to the world, sole author and lawgiver of the universe. On the contrary, the innumerable deities of other religions—notably of the Hellenic religion—were but special powers, of reciprocally limited authority, resembling natural objects, subject nearly to the same imperfections and to the same vicissitudes. In consequence, seeing in the universe, in its successive phenomena, and in its various parts, a unity, an order,

* Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, vol. xxi., 1st part, p. 1 and following.

a harmony which neither the discordant wills of the gods nor their fortuitous adventures could explain, men early tried to discover, by means of reason, that universal cause as to which mythology remained mute. Such was, it seems, with the Greeks the origin of philosophy.'

So long as the Greek mind preserved its vigour and originality, the absence of an authorized religion had its advantages. But when intellectual culture became weakened, superstition, against which polytheism opposed too few barriers, spread over the world, and injured even the finest minds. In this respect I do not know anything more sad than the spectacle offered by philosophy from the commencement of the third century of our era. What men were Ammonius, Plotinus, Proclus, Isidorus! What noble minds and great intellects! Where could we find a martyr who by her austere charm would be equal to Hypatia? What a man above all was Porphyrus, of all antiquity perhaps the only scholar who possessed exactitude and critical acumen, as Niebuhr and M. Letronne have very successfully pointed out! Yet what indelible blots in the biography of these great men! What aberrations in all that relates to spirits, to familiar demons, to theurgy! Porphyrus, excellent critic in everything else, admits, as regards metempsychosis and apparitions, things little less absurd than table-turning and spirit-rapping! Some time ago I read the lives of these great men, admirable in so many respects, with the intention of presenting

them as the saints of philosophy. Doubtless, by their lofty character, their high morality, their noble pride, often also by the legends attached to their names, they are worthy to rank beside the most revered Christian ascetics. But their credulity on the score of spirits wounded my feelings and prevented me from appreciating the better sides of their lives. There also lies the venom which taints the character, otherwise most attractive, of Julian. If the restoration of paganism was only destined to revive the gross superstitions with which that Emperor seems to have been constantly occupied, it is not easy to understand why a man of so much intellect should, for the sake of such absurdities, have earned for himself the infamous title of Apostate.

But I am anticipating the order of time; I am speaking of the decadence of paganism, and as yet M. Maury has only treated of the period when myths were still full of freshness and life. In the next volume he will set forth the religious institutions of Greece, all that relates to their mysteries, to oracles, to festivals, to priesthood, to the practices of devotion. There it is that M. Maury's erudition and criticism promise us the most interesting results. Of all the *savants* of our time M. Maury is the best acquainted with the organization and, if I may be permitted the expression, the *vestry details* of ancient worship. A book in which the whole history of Greek polytheism is depicted—in its gradual transformations, in its

alliance with the religion of the Romans, in its struggle with Christianity, in its agony, prolonged through the superstitions of the Middle Ages almost to our own day—cannot fail to be of surpassing interest.

COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY.

ABOUT ten years ago the study of the religions of antiquity underwent quite a decisive revolution. The method of comparative philology then began to be applied to it, and from this application very important results followed at once. First of all, it was ascertained that the division of mythologies coincides with the division of languages, so much so that there is an Indo-European mythology, as there is a family of Indo-European languages. Afterwards, the essential processes of the formation of myths were revealed. The glory of that great discovery belongs to Germany. Eugène Burnouf had certainly foreseen it, and the last pages of the preface of the third volume of the 'Bhâgavata Purâna' prove beyond doubt that in his last years he had arrived at most correct views concerning the origin of myths. But engaged in works long since begun, and to finish which he obstinately applied himself, he stopped on the shores of that vast ocean, and was satisfied with fixing on it a long and searching look. The credit of the creation of comparative philology belongs chiefly to MM. Adalbert Kuhn and Max

Müller. Baron Eckstein, with his unusual shrewdness and penetration—M. Guigniaut, with that love of truth which pervades all he did, understood it at once. M. Maury, always keeping pace with the advance of real knowledge, accepted unhesitatingly the new results in his 'History of the Religions of Ancient Greece.' Lastly, M. Bréal, possessing the chief instrument of discoveries—scientific knowledge of languages—entered resolutely on the path of original research, and took his place, by the side of MM. Kuhn and Müller, among the most eminent workers. His two essays upon 'Hercules and Cacus' and the 'Myth of Œdipus,'* show what light may be thrown by the new method upon problems which the old school solved but imperfectly, or pronounced insoluble.

That method, reduced to general terms, may be summed up as follows:

By the necessity of their structure, Indo-European idioms were, from their origin, obliged to animate each object. To every substantive, even that which applied to abstract or lifeless ideas, was assigned a gender; in speech the idea which it represented figured as a man or a woman. Notions were thus transformed into actions, the duration of which was determined by the tense in which the verb was employed. Every idea became a

* M. Bréal has published these two essays, and others besides, in a volume entitled 'Mélanges de Mythologie et de Linguistique,' Paris, 1878.

story; every impression became a scene in the drama of the universe, and as, at the primitive period of the creation of language, all the forces of nature were looked upon as personal and free agents, every one of the facts told about them was an incident of their history. The air, the sky, the sun, the dawn were thus predestined, by the names they bore and the verbs employed when speaking of them, to become the heroes of romantic adventures, lending themselves to all sorts of double meanings and misinterpretations.

These misinterpretations occurred very early. The primitive gods, each corresponding to some natural phenomenon, became, as soon as language began to grow old, individuals of whom long stories were told. Mythology and religion manifested then a tendency to divorce. These stories contained numberless absurdities, and were, in most cases, not at all edifying. Religion, on the contrary, was aspiring more and more towards an ideal of morality and piety. Hence a strange confusion arose. Myths, far from constituting the religion of ancient peoples, were to them a cause of perplexity. It became necessary to endeavour to explain them, to soften them down. The gods became types of moral heroism; there was a thorough contradiction between what they were expected to be and the deeds attributed to them. To explain these strange deeds two theologies were created, the one adopting the historical interpretation (school of Euemerus), the

other having recourse to allegorical interpretation (Stoics). As regards critical science, they were both erroneous, and completely mistook the genius of primitive times.

These schools reappear more or less in modern research. Banier gives the date of Jupiter's reign, and narrates the political consequences of the quarrels of Osiris, King of Egypt, with his brother Typhon. Clavier furnishes the list of the old dynasties of Hercules, Prometheus, etc. Bacon, on the contrary, bases upon the myth of Typhon, as we find it in the Homeric Odes and in Hesiod, a political treatise. In our days the symbolic school, though endowed with a much truer impression of ancient religions, could not guard itself against a fundamental error. By attributing to the supposed inventors of myths philosophical ideas which were not incorporated with them until several centuries later, that school has inverted the order of time. The true, though too long neglected key to those old fables is the study of language. The axiom, *Nomina numina*, which Burnouf delighted to repeat, is truth itself. The analysis of words is the analysis of the oldest religion of the Indo-European race. The philological school pitilessly unravels the formation of myths. In them it looks neither for theology, nor philosophy, nor science, nor morality, nor history; it only seeks for transformed signs of the first impressions experienced by our race in the presence of nature. Mythology as a whole

becomes thus a vast play upon words. The myth is formed by the inevitable misuse of a language in which each substantive was an animated being, in which every verb signified a physical action. Myths are multiplied through the misuse of synonyms, of homonyms, and by means of popular etymology, a fruitful source of fables even in our day. Being a safe instrument of analysis, comparative philology thus acts as a guide to the science of myths, and takes the place of the arbitrary guesses by means of which the old schools endeavoured to fathom those strange enigmas. Without the help of philology, researches in comparative mythology run the risk of proceeding blindfold, for the field of hypotheses is unlimited. But, with the aid afforded by words, which stamp each fable with an indelible record of its origin, chances of error are considerably reduced. One single grammatical proof speaks louder in favour of the affinity between two myths than the most striking resemblances, and the closest coincidence in the story is of far less importance than words preserved in the various languages of the family, whose identity is established according to the rules of comparative grammar.

Such are the principles which M. Bréal, ingenious and original disciple of his learned masters from Germany, applied to two of the most interesting myths of antiquity. The fable of Cacus has an exclusively Italian appearance. M. Bréal

very successfully points out that it belongs to a group of mythic ideas and even of mythic terms, which, with slight modifications, is to be met with in Greece, in India, in Persia, in Germany. With marvellous sagacity, he recognises the cross-roads in which popular imagination, in quest of wonders, went astray to alter and embellish the original narrative. By referring to the great primitive book of Aryan religions, to the Vedas, he at last discovers the first, essentially naturalistic, germ of the myth. Doubtful indications are here combined with unquestionable pieces of evidence. But the aim of such researches is not to explain all with the same degree of accuracy; it is to light upon the general processes by which those strange fantastic creations were formed, whose secret as regards details may very possibly escape us for ever.

The myth of Œdipus having been formed mostly on the soil of Greece, draws but indirect light from Vedic literature. It is a very much obliterated myth, which soon received developments foreign to its origin. Perhaps some of M. Bréal's sentences will occasion misunderstandings. In explaining these fables, it is highly important to distinguish most carefully the meaning applied to mythical personages at different periods. In mythology, as in the science of language, etymology preserves its full rights; but etymology must not be asked to fix the sense a word may have had at relatively modern dates. The words

thygater, tochter, daughter, have for common origin the Sanscrit word *duhitri,* which means 'milk-maid'—young girls, in the huts of our earliest ancestors, having been entrusted with the task of milking the cattle. It would, however, be most incorrect to translate in that sense the three words we have cited when found in Homer, in Goethe, or in Shakespeare. Perhaps, also, M. Bréal may be accused of speculations not fully established. But that which, in the young philologist's essay, possesses a high scientific value, is the etymological analysis of some most important words. *Laïus* is really the *Dasyu* of India (let us bear in mind, for the transition of *d* into *l, Ulysses* = Odysseus), the great enemy of the solar god, that which the sun kills. Œdipus is one of the thousand forms of the sun struggling with monsters. The story of the Sphynx proceeds from a wonderfully simple pun on the very name of Œdipus (he who *knows* the riddle of the *feet*). All the details of the fable are far from being cleared up; but the kernel of the myth, and the manner in which it was formed, are pointed out with sufficient precision.

The key to these great discoveries is the study of Sanscrit, chiefly of Vedic Sanscrit. The exclusively Hellenic school of the Welkers, of the Lobecks, who would explain Greece by Greece alone, is extinct. Greece must be explained by a comprehensive survey of the race to which it belongs. The very qualities of the Greek mind, that charm-

ing genius which turns to gold all it touches, made the Hellenes rather indifferent preservers of early traditions. Every fable becomes in their hands a subject of individual composition, a pretext for ingenious fictions and for works of art of eternal beauty. Never were mortals more unceremonious with gods. From their genealogies differently intertwined; poets continually drew original combinations, unexpected arrangements, as Glycera used to do with her bouquets. That is why, the more we study the past of mankind, the more unique and incomparable does Greece become. Every discovery is a hymn to her glory, and adds new nobility and perfection to her image. Sombre fanaticism, horrible scholasticism, with its endless articles of faith, were always unknown to her. Provided you spoke of the gods in fine language, you were absolved. 'Grace,' says Pindar, the excellent theologian, 'grace which turns all things into honey for human beings, gives authority to error and makes the incredible believed. . . . It is the future which discerns the truth. But it becomes man to say nothing of the gods but what is beautiful: the fault is then less serious.'

FIRST WORKS ON BUDDHISM.

A DOCTRINE which finds the supreme end of life in nothing, or, if we prefer it, in a paradise in which man is reduced to the state of a mummy—a doctrine which proclaims that the height of perfection is the annihilation of the life transmitted to us—in which man is looked upon as the highest step in creation—in which the idea of a Supreme Being only appears at a late period—such a doctrine is so extraordinary a phenomenon that our minds admit its possibility with the utmost reluctance. Yet such a doctrine exists. To make the paradox more complete, this doctrine, in appearance the most despairingly hopeless that ever was professed, has inspired the most diverse races with wonders of devotion; the Church of Nihilism remains to the present time, without any notable schism, the most compact religious edifice of the East. This is certainly a fact unique in the history of the human mind. Fantastic by its destiny, Buddhism is still more so by its philosophy, its teachings, the legend of its founder, the strange style of its sacred books. Uniting the most abstract scholasticism with the strangest

dreams of imagination, this religion, at first without a god, and almost without any form of worship, rushes into the wildest extravagances of mythology. The religion which at the outset was the most philosophical, and in which certain modern schools affect to find the last word of wisdom, has become the grossest of popular creeds. Though opposed to all our instincts, Buddhism yet exerts a morbid fascination, like those fearful monstrosities which at times unveil the secret abysses of nature.

Buddhism is really a discovery of our century. From Marco Polo, who knew the legend of the 'Lalitavistāra,'* to Father Horace della Penna, nothing but fables had reached us from Central Asia. Seventy-five years ago Buddhism was still the object of the most contradictory assertions. To some, Buddha was an African negro, for he had woolly hair; to others, he was the god Odin (Wodan); to others, again, a planetary deity. Certain similarities with Christianity completely misled inquirers. Some saw in them proof of a Nestorian origin; others concluded that Buddhism was the prototype of Christianity. A pope, monks, confession, saints, relics, bells—what more could be wanted to establish the close relationship of the two religions?

The studies of which China and Central Asia were the subject at the beginning of this century began to dispel the darkness. But the man who

* Relation, chap. clxxviii.

really lifted the veil was Mr. Brian Houghton Hodgson, English resident at the Court of Nepâl. Called upon by his position as agent of the East India Company, which made him the almost absolute sovereign of several millions of men, to reside in the centre of a country where Buddhism is still flourishing, Mr. Hodgson, as early as 1821, resolved to take advantage of his sojourn in Katmandhu to study a doctrine about which so little was known. Hitherto Buddhism had only been met with in Thibet, Mongolia, China, Japan, Indo-China, Malaysia, and Ceylon. A keen critic could already have surmised that the initial impulse came from India; but then arose a seemingly insurmountable difficulty. If India was the birthplace of Buddhism, why does India offer hardly any trace of it, except in the Himalayan valleys immediately bordering on Thibet, which are scarcely considered as part of Hindostan? All doubts vanished when Mr. Hodgson announced to the Asiatic Societies of Calcutta, London, and Paris the existence in the Nepâl monasteries of a vast collection of Buddhist works written in Sanscrit, and unknown in the rest of India. The origin of Buddhism was then discovered; no doubt could thenceforth be cast either on the cradle of that fantastic religion, or on the language which it spoke at its birth.

With the most disinterested generosity, Mr. Hodgson, anxious that learned Europe should enjoy the results of his discovery, gave, in 1837,

to the Asiatic Society of Paris, a most valuable collection of works written in Sanscrit, which that Society soon supplemented by the addition of copies made at its own expense. A philologist already famous for his critical genius, M. Eugène Burnouf, thought that the best manner in which to acknowledge the generous intentions of the giver was to make known the contents of those precious volumes. With this object he resolved to publish one of the books, with commentaries, and preceded by an introduction, wherein he would expound the history and the dogmas of Buddhism. He chose for this purpose 'the Lotus of True Faith,'* perhaps the most characteristic of all the canonical books of Nepâl. But, when drawing up the introduction which was intended to precede the translation, it struck him that the introduction was becoming the chief work, and could not even be confined to one volume. Thus came out, in 1844, the first volume of the 'Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism,'† a masterpiece of erudition and scientific spirit, the appearance of which was a landmark in the history of religions. In it M. Burnouf expounded with marvellous lucidity the origin of Buddhism and its vicissitudes. The doctrine was set forth

* *Saddharma pundarîka;* literally, the white lotus of the law of good men. *Nelumbo* is the Cingalese name of the Indian and Chinese lotus (*Nelumbium speciosum*).—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

† 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' par Eug. Burnouf. 4to., Paris, 1844.

according to the texts of Nepâl, which served as models for the books of Thibet, Mongolia, and China. A second volume was to complete the work, by the exposition of Southern Buddhism, according to the Pâli books of Ceylon, which were adopted in Indo-China and Malaysia. Conjointly with this, the translation of the 'Lotus,' long since completed, was to appear together with the memoirs, for which there had been no room in the introduction. Alas! premature death, in depriving France of one of her glories, was to cut short that noble series of researches. The illustrious Orientalist was correcting the last sheets of the 'Lotus,' when he felt the first symptoms of the disease which was about to carry him off (May, 1852).

Eugène Burnouf worked on such an excellent system that his productions, even when incomplete, must remain the corner-stone of the researches made after him. This great master was always extremely cautious in his affirmations. He was constantly in fear of imposing his own opinions and, by the authority of his assertions, exercising an influence inconsistent with the love of truth. That is why, after a period of thirty years, the 'Introduction' and the 'Lotus' have lost none of their value.

On the advice of Burnouf, M. Foucaux, one of his most studious pupils, published, at the same time, a French translation of the 'Lalita-vistâra,' or 'Legendary Life of Sakya-Mouni,'

according to the Thibetan version. The foundation of the history of Buddhism was thus fairly laid. It only remained to explain the apparent incoherences which at first provoked such legitimate surprise.

Four facts apparently difficult to reconcile resulted from that first series of labours, undertaken with so much steadfastness and judgment. First we have a legend full of charm and, it may be said, of piety; then a religious revolution, which, whatever may be the opinion professed as to the personality of its founder, preserves all its importance; then again, a Nihilistic philosophy, whose connection with the miracles of abnegation it produced could not be detected; lastly, a learned religious organization which in the Middle Ages was for Central Asia what Christianity was for barbarous Europe—namely, a superior principle of morality and civilization. Much fresh light has been thrown upon these four points; nothing, however, has yet modified, in any sensible degree, that which Burnouf's genius had detected at the first glance.

I.

The books which pretend to set forth the life and teachings of the Buddha are of two kinds: the simple Sutras of the south, the developed Sutras of the north. The simple or primitive Sutras possess an historical appearance which captivates at first sight. Every incident contained in them

takes place in India, and in a defined spot. Sakya teaches a few disciples, whose names are given, in the garden of a certain Anâtha-Pindika. They have discussions; it is obvious that the new doctrine still meets with opposition, and must yet prove what it is worth. In the developed Sutras, on the contrary, everything occurs before a fabulous audience of *Bôdhisatvas*, as imaginary as the worlds they come from. Nobody has to be converted; everybody believes. Instead of real disciples, we see before us myriads of beings with names impossible to pronounce. In the simple Sutras there are neither magic, nor extravagant prodigies, nor celestial Buddhas. The contents of the work are credible and limited. In the developed Sutras everything is full of the most absurd hyperboles. A fantastic arithmetic sports with numbers formed of the unit followed by one hundred and forty ciphers. Multitudes of *Bôdhisatvas*, as numerous as the grains of sand rolled down by a million rivers huge as the Ganges, emerge together from the crevices of the earth, to listen to Sakya. It all looks like a visionary fabric, a castle in the air. Like haschisch, these exuberant dreams do away with time and space. The lassitude they produce is soon followed by drowsiness. The exposition of the 'Lotus' lasted, we are told, sixty mean *kalpas*,* during which the *Bôdhisatva* re-

* An arbitrary measure of time equivalent to one day and one night of Buddha, or four milliards three hundred and twenty millions of solar years.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

mained on the same seat, his body as motionless as his thoughts. All creation, however, listened to him without suffering the least fatigue either of mind or body. If the authors of these strange stories intended to compose a powerful narcotic, precursor of the *nirvâna*,* it must be confessed they thoroughly succeeded.

The 'Lalitavistăra' is certainly the most curious in the series of writings which reveal the *Λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα* of the atheistic *Christ* of India. This Gospel of Nihilism, which offers some striking resemblances and some still more notable contrasts with the Gospel of Galilee, is well known to us, thanks to the valuable publication of M. Foucaux.† We are going to expose its texture, by tearing off handfuls of the golden spangles with which it is overlaid. It will be seen at once that it is not with the truly infantile *naïveté* of the canonical Gospels, but rather with the puerile tediousness of the apocryphal Gospels of the Child-

* A Sanscrit word from *nir-gā* (to cease to breathe), meaning, according to Buddhistic theories, the state of one who, being free from desire for material or immaterial existence, is finally emancipated from matter, and, having no more individual existence, is united with the Deity.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

'The popular view of Nirvâna—as representing the entrance of the soul into rest; a subduing of all wishes and desires; indifference to joy and pain, to good and evil—was in my opinion the conception of Buddha and his disciples.'—MAX MÜLLER.

† 'Rgya-Tchér-Rol-Pa,' or 'Développement des Jeux,' Paris, 1848. (Translated from the Thibetan version of the original Sanscrit.)

hood,* that the pretended biography of the Hindoo Saviour may be compared. The canonical Gospels possess in the highest degree the art which India lacks—that of knowing where to stop on the road to exaggeration. Blinded by belief in the supernatural, misled by the dangerous taste she possesses for playing with infinity and losing herself in meaningless enumerations, India lets her imagination run riot, thus violating the first rule of religious invention, which is to rave with measure, and to let fiction follow the analogies of truth.

The *Bôdhisatva*, ripe for deliverance, having reached the last but one of his temporal peregrinations, abides in Tusitas, one of the heavenly spheres, where his merits have won for him supreme rank. Thousands of previous Buddhas, of gods, of genii, do him homage. But that does not suffice him. In his desire to attain supreme intelligence, he prepares to assume the human form, the only form under which one can become a Buddha. The duration of his sojourn on earth is fixed at twelve years. The gods, learning that the *Bôdhisatva* is about to enter the womb of a mother, go to India, disguised as Brahmins, to consult the Vedas. There they see that the *Bôdhisatva* will, at his birth, be endowed with the thirty-two signs marking great men, and will, as a matter of course, be either king or Buddha. On hearing this, a great number of hermits rise to heaven

* See the episode of Buddha at the writing-school.

as far as the region of fire, where they are consumed.

Before descending from heaven, the *Bôdhisatva* goes through four great examinations to ascertain where he is to be born. The gods review carefully the sixteen royal families of India; but they find fault with each; the *Bôdhisatva* enumerates the signs by which the privileged family may be recognised. That of Sakya alone combines all the required conditions.

Before quitting heaven, the *Bôdhisatva* gives the gods his last injunctions, and charges them to follow him, so as to attain with him final deliverance. The gods, weeping, kiss his feet; he consoles them, saying that when he is gone Maitreya will teach them the law. The *Bôdhisatva* inquires under what shape he is to enter his mother's womb. Several forms of gods and genii are proposed to him. A god informs him that the 'Rigveda' mentions that of a young white elephant, which form the *Bôdhisatva* eventually adopts.

In the meantime, eight signs, forerunners of some great event, appear in the gardens of Sakya. The birds of the Himalaya come and perch on the balustrades; all the trees blossom; all the ponds are covered with lotus; oil and butter, though used profusely, do not diminish; trombones, theorbos, cymbals, without being touched, give forth harmonious sounds; a pure light, cheering both body and soul, pervades everything.

The queen, Maya-Devi, foreseeing her destiny, asks permission of the king to give herself up to austerities, to seclude herself, and to offer numerous alms. The king acquiesces. Meanwhile, the gods and the *Bôdhisatvas* of all the universe set out to accompany the Buddha. An infinite splendour lights up all worlds; all beings experience feelings of indescribable kindness and goodwill; all sufferings are suspended; the torments of hell are intermitted; millions of instruments of music are heard; hundreds of millions of gods support the *Bôdhisatva's* car with their heads, their arms, and their shoulders.

The queen, asleep on her couch, is dreaming. The *Bôdhisatva* enters her womb through her right side, whilst she, in a dream, sees the mystery that is taking place. She rises, filled with a new sensation of well-being, and goes to inform the king of her felicity. The gods offer their abode, that Maya may, without being disturbed, await there the miraculous birth. The king has a palace built purposely for her; but by a miracle Maya appears at the same time in the gods' abode.

The *Bôdhisatva*, in his mother's womb, seated with crossed legs, was constantly plunged in meditation. His mother saw him in her womb; she felt neither oppression nor passion; she had no disturbing dreams; she never saw anything whose shape, sound, smell, or taste were unwelcome to her. During that time the people of Kapilavastou

were happy and virtuous; they lived in bliss and innocence.

The time of Buddha's birth is close at hand. All the flowers open their buds; young fruit-trees are everywhere rising; lion cubs come rushing from the Himalaya and roam through Kapilavastou, without hurting anyone. The children of the gods appear in the women's room, moving about in all directions; the women of the Nagas are also seen half clad, flitting about in the air; ten thousand daughters of gods, holding in their hands fans of peacocks' feathers, are beheld motionless in heaven; ten thousand urns, filled with perfumes, pass round the city of Kapilavastou; ten thousand daughters of gods are seen carrying parasols, flags, banners; one hundred thousand children of gods, holding shells, drums, tambourines, also appear. All the winds abstain from blowing, and the streams stop running; fire no longer burns; pearl chaplets, thousands of precious stones, are seen hanging from the galleries, the palaces, the terraces, the arches of doorways; the jackdaws, owls, vultures, wolves and jackals cease their cries; harmonious sounds are alone to be heard; everywhere in the air large and small parasols unfold themselves; the timbals of heaven utter deep notes; the high places and the low places of the earth assume the same level; all the gods of the forests, half emerging from the foliage, are seen stooping and motionless.

Whilst these wonders are taking place the queen enters the garden of Lumbini; she goes from grove to grove, examining first one green tree, then another. Suddenly one of the trees bows to and greets her. The queen, having stretched out her arm, takes hold of a branch, and looks up to heaven in silent prayer. The *Bôdhisatva* comes out from her right side without injuring her. Indra and Brahma receive him in their arms. An immense lotus shoots through the ground to serve him as a cradle. Two streams of water, one hot, the other cold, spring forth for him to bathe in; from heaven a parasol comes down to shade him.

But he, reclining upon the lotus, attentively considers the four points of space, with the glance of a great man. He perceives the millions of worlds, the gods and the men. He proclaims that he has come to save all creatures, and sprinkle over all beneficent rain from the great cloud of the law. A thrill passes through all beings. A deluge of flowers, of garlands, of ornaments, and odoriferous powders fills all space; the light of a hundred thousand blended hues, bringing comfort to the body and to the soul, breaks over all worlds. Passion, hatred, ignorance, pride, sadness, despondency, fear, envy, are banished from the hearts of all beings. The sound of the dance is heard in all directions.

It is a law that the mother of a *Bôdhisatva* must die seven days after the birth of her son,

because, seeing him so beautiful, her heart would break at the moment of his becoming an ascetic, in order to devote himself to the salvation of mortals. And so Maya-Devi expires in the midst of the *Apsaras*,* who gather round her, and comes to life again in the midst of the gods. The king, before returning to the palace, visits five hundred Sakyas with his son. They all place their dwellings at the child's disposal, who, multiplying himself, makes them believe he is the guest of each. All the women are anxious to nurse him. His aunt, the venerable Pradjâpatî, is chosen in preference to all others; eight nurses are appointed to carry him, eight to suckle him, eight to wash him, eight to watch him while at play.

One episode, though it has not the same harmonious brevity, recalls the episode of the aged Simeon, in St. Luke's Gospel. A famous hermit, living on the slope of the Himalaya, and versed in the five transcendental sciences, on witnessing these marvellous apparitions, concluded that the great diamond had appeared. With his all-seeing eye, he saw in the town of Kapilavastou the child worshipped by all the worlds. He came through the air, and stopped at the king's door. The king received him with respect. 'O hermit,' said he to him, 'I do not recollect having ever seen you before.

* Apsaras, *i.e.* ap-sri-as, the name of female divinities, acting as *houris* in paradise.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

What is the object of your visit, and what do you wish?' The hermit answered: 'Mighty king, to you a son is born, and I have come here to see him.' The king replied: 'Great hermit, the child is sleeping; wait a little until he wakes.' 'Mighty king,' retorted the hermit, 'such beings do not sleep long.' Indeed, the *Bôdhisatva* soon showed that he was awake; the king, carefully holding him in his arms, brought him to the hermit, who, seeing his body was perfect (he possessed the thirty-two signs that indicate a great man, as well as the eighty secondary marks), clasped his hands, kissed the child's feet, took him in his arms, and remained thoughtful. Seeing him sigh and shed tears, the king anxiously said to him: 'O hermit, why do you weep?' 'Mighty king, it is not over the child that I weep: he has not the slightest defect. It is for myself that I shed tears. Mighty king, I am stricken with years, and this young prince will manifest the perfect and complete intelligence of Buddha. To beings afflicted by passion, envy, and distress, he will restore calmness. Beings held in the trammels of transitory life, and whose doom is corruption, this child shall free from their bondage. Even as the flower of the fig-tree is but seldom seen in this world, so, great and mighty king, hundreds of millions of *kalpas* have to elapse before the advent of a Buddha. This child shall enable hundreds of millions of beings to cross over to the other shore. And I shall not see this pearl

of Buddhas! That is why, mighty king, in my sadness I heave such sighs.'

The same suavity of imagination and the same prolixity of style deck with flowers, but with flowers whose fragrance is somewhat soporific, the accounts of the Buddha's entering upon his career of Saviour. Remaining in the women's apartment, he ran the risk of forgetting his mission; to remind him of it, the gods change the notes of the concerts into exhortations to him to deliver the world from suffering and death. While out walking, the sight of a decrepit old man, of a sick person, and of a corpse, convinces him of the vanity of all things. His meeting with a hermit, who has attained perfect calmness of mind, leads him to embrace the religious life. Obstacles thicken in his path. The gloomy forebodings of Gôpâ, his betrothed, the young girl's dreadful dreams, the mysterious vision she has, all act as warnings to the father, who enjoins the women to redouble their attractions that his son may forget mankind; but the interest of humanity is paramount. The gods and the genii agree to plunge the whole city in slumber, and to open the gates to the young prince. Sakya at midnight ascends the roof of the palace and sees the gods waiting for him. At the same moment rises the star which presided over his birth. Discovering by that sign that the hour has come, he makes his escape; led by the gods, he is already far away when daylight breaks.

So far, many of these incidents call to mind the legend of Krishna. The account of the solitary life of the young Sakya is peculiar to Buddhism. The fugitive places himself under the direction of famous ascetics, none of whom can satisfy him. Perceiving that they are all misled, he decides not to imitate them. During the space of ten years he practises extraordinary austerities; he becomes so emaciated that the gods are afraid he will die. They inform his mother, who is living among them. She goes to visit Sakya, who is so weak that he hardly recognises her; however, he consoles her. The people of the neighbourhood take him for a spirit from the cemetery. The demon, enraged at his austerities, tries to tempt him. The *Bôdhisatva* repels all the seducer's assaults; but, perceiving that physical exhaustion does not lead to increased intelligence, he prepares to take abundant nourishment. Ten young villagers bring him food, and he recovers all his beauty. He makes for himself a garment of a shroud. He bathes in the Nairanajana; the gods throw all sorts of flowers and all kinds of perfumes over him.

Arrived at Bôdhimanda,* Sakya, recollecting that all previous Buddhas sat there on a carpet of

* The seat of wisdom, named also *Vadjrâsana* in Sanscrit; it is, according to Buddhistic legends, the place where the *Bôdhisatva* is to become a Buddha. It is the same place as the modern town of Gaya, in Southern Belsar.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

grass,* at the foot of the tree of intelligence, seats himself, and, facing the East, vows not to rise till he has acquired perfect intelligence. All the trees, all the mountains of the world bow towards Bôdhimanda. All the children born on that day sleep with their heads turned in the direction of Bôdhimanda. Sakya is subjected to a final attack from the demons; their missiles are changed into flowers. He is called upon to adduce evidence of his virtuous deeds; the earth bears witness to them. The demon possesses daughters capable of putting the vocation of an ascetic to the most dangerous proof; he incites them to try against the young saint the thirty-two spells of women. The *Bôdhisatva*, by means of undeniable arguments, convinces them that they are only illusions, and that the qualities of desire are not qualities.

Henceforth delivered from all which fetters thought, the royal hermit progresses from meditation to meditation. In the first he does away with desires; in the second, he eliminates actions and judgments; in the third, though preserving recollection, he attains mystical indifference; finally, in the fourth, he puts aside all personality and enters into pure thought, exempt from all

* According to the 'Lalitavistâra,' the *Bôdhisatva* having seen a man named *Svastika* who was engaged in cutting grass, requested him to give him some to make a seat with. Now, *Svastika* is the name of a kind of mystical sign, an emblem of Buddha, which is sometimes accidentally formed by bits of grass.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

changes. Against their father's advice, three of the demon's daughters attempt again to seduce the Buddha, who, without even heeding them, changes them into decrepit old women. Their father persuades them to confess their fault to the Buddha, who forgives them and restores them their first beauty.

Sakya then perceives at a glance all his previous existences; he traces the causes of disease and death, and ascertains that the only means of putting a stop to them is to annihilate birth and individual existence. Become master of the elements of life, he exclaims: 'It is thus I shall put an end to suffering;' and he enters upon the *nirvāna*. Immediately all beings experience an indescribable feeling of comfort; all the regions of the world are filled with a light which appeases all suffering; the timbals of the gods resound in the air; the earth trembles in six different ways; all the Buddhas burst forth with shouts of joy from the ten points of space. Sakya pronounces these words: 'The hermit, like the bird born from the egg, has broken his shell. I have attained the law of immortality, profound, calm, free from perturbation, luminous, beyond idea. Silent, I shall remain in the shadow of forests, in the depths of my own nature. No substance exists here below. For him who knows successive causes and effects, there is neither being nor negation.'

II.

The religious philosophy which pervades this fantastic gospel is more likely than the gospel itself to astonish persons unacquainted with the peculiarities of the human mind. 'Love, sacrifice, oblation have no reality; our actions, good or bad, have no result; this world does not exist; as little does the future world exist; there are no beings of supernatural birth. As for man, that compound of the four elements, when his time has come, earth returns to the bulk of the earth, the water to the bulk of the water, the fire to the bulk of the fire, the wind to the bulk of the wind; the organs of sense reascend to the ether; four men carry the coffin containing the dead body as far as the rules for the cremation of corpses prescribe; the bones become of a dirty white colour; the good deeds perish in the flames of the funeral pile. Those who maintain that something still exists are, whether ignorant or wise, decomposed and annihilated after death. There is no murderer, no instigator of the murder, no listening being, no speaking being, no knowing being, no teaching being. When a man cuts off a head with a sword, that deed is not one being depriving another of life; only, between the head and the trunk, the sword encounters an empty space.'*

* Extract from the 'Samanna phala Sutta,' in Burnouf's 'Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' pp. 456, 457.

Is this a strange mockery? Is it negation carried to the extreme, with the object of striking terror into the human conscience, and bringing it back to faith? It is both. Buddhism delights in contradictions; the Buddha came to deliver men from false fancies, by teaching them that nothing exists. 'Just as, when a man is troubled by evil dreams and cries out in his sleep, his parents and friends call out to him: "Have no fear, have no fear," so the blessed Buddhas teach the law to creatures disturbed by the four kinds of delusions. "There is," they say, "neither man, nor woman, nor creature, nor life, nor spirit, nor person; these conditions have no reality; they are all the production of fancy; they all resemble an illusion, a dream, something factitious, like the image of the moon reflected in the water." Human creatures, having heard this teaching, see all conditions free from passion; they see them devoid of error, having no nature of their own. With their thoughts resting on space, those creatures, as though they had accomplished their time, enter completely into the domain of the *nirvâna*, where no trace is left of the aggregation of the constituent elements of existence.'*

'Having completely raised himself above the idea of form, the idea of resistance having vanished, the idea of diversity being no longer conceivable

* Extract from the 'Vinaya Sûtra,' in Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 545.

for him, the hermit, having reached the region of infinity in space, where he says to himself, "Space is infinite," stops there. Having completely raised himself above the region of infinity in space, after having reached the region of infinity in intelligence, where he says to himself, "Intelligence is infinite," he stops there. Having completely raised himself above the region of infinity in intelligence, having reached the region where absolutely nothing exists, and where he says to himself, "There exists absolutely nothing," he stops there. Having completely raised himself above the region where there exists absolutely nothing, having reached the region where there are neither ideas nor absence of ideas, he stops there. Having completely raised himself above the region where there are neither ideas nor absence of ideas, having reached cessation of both idea and perception, he stops there.'* The ascetic is now no more thinking than non-thinking; he is neutral as regards ideas and as regards the absence of ideas alike.

'The man who walks in the perfection of wisdom must not stop at form, any more than at sensation, any more than at idea, any more than at conceptions, any more than at knowledge. Why so? It is that if he stop at form he walks in the belief that form exists; he walks not in the perfection of wisdom. And in like manner, if he

* Extract from the 'Sãggîti Sutta,' at the end of the 'Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' p. 809.

stop at sensation, idea, conceptions, knowledge, he walks in the belief that all these exist; he walks not in the perfection of wisdom. Not achieving the perfection of wisdom, he will not attain omniscience, because he believes he can reach that which cannot be reached. Why so? It is that in the perfection of wisdom form is not grasped, and that the same applies to sensation, to idea, to conceptions, to knowledge. The perfection of wisdom itself is not grasped; omniscience itself is not grasped. The name of Buddha is but a word; the Buddha himself is like unto an illusion; the conditions that constitute the Buddha resemble an illusion, a dream. The Buddha cannot be conceived as having beginning, end, or middle. Why so? It is that he cannot be conceived at all. His form being without limit, the Buddha must be looked upon as something illimitable.'*

Logic carried to the utmost, upsetting at one stroke all affirmations, whether positive, negative, or indifferent—such is Buddhism. With it everything passes away: God, the world, the Buddha, man, mind, nature. Truth is unspeakable, invisible, because it is void itself.† Every thesis is propounded in three different manners—the one affirmative, the other negative, the third neither affirmative nor negative. Each of them

* 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' pp. 469-481. E. Burnouf.

† 'Lalitavistâra,' pp. 364, 368. / Foucaux.

is then equally dismissed, because the adoption of either means the rejection of the two others. And the sage, perceiving that embracing one opinion means disagreeing with the others, gives up the task without adopting any.* For instance, to this question: 'Does the Buddha exist after death, or does he not?' it should be replied: 'The Buddha exists after death; the Buddha does not exist after death; the Buddha exists and does not exist after death; the Buddha is no more existent than he is non-existent after death.' To every question the sage thus replies by affirmation and negation, either separately or conjointly: 'No, it is not so; no, it is not otherwise; no, it is not true that it is so; no, it is not true that it is not because it is not so.'† To err is to regard as durable that which is but transient, and to attribute reality to that which only exists in imagination.

This act of the human consciousness, in which self-inspection ends merely in self-destruction, is one of the most extraordinary phenomena of history. It is difficult to imagine the strange impression produced by this ever identical thought, this eternal circle revolving round itself, and fatally leading to the stupefaction of thought; it is the witches' dance of logic, the humming of a void like that of a hollow top. The wheel is

* 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 458. E. Burnouf.

† E. Burnouf, 'Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' pp. 459, 460.

a correct image of this eternal tautology. The wheel is the perfect symbol of Buddhistic countries. The devotees always hold in their hands a wheel, which they set spinning; there are some large ones, which are put in motion with the arms; others are set to work by streams; others, placed on the housetops, are kept moving by the wind; others again, hung up over the fireplace, are worked by the smoke. On their circumference is inscribed the formula: '*Om mani padme houm!*' ('Hail to thee, pearl enclosed in the lotus!') This formula seems to be the rhythm of pulsation of Buddhistic life, from one end of Asia to the other. Men and women, old people and children, laymen and monks are ever repeating it on the beads of an endless rosary. Engraved over the doors, it also hangs in long streamers from one house to the other, from one tree to another; sometimes, crossing over a stream or a ravine, it unites two mountains, casting on the valley an ever-moving shadow. It may be read on the bark of trees, on rocks, on heaps of stones, on dried-up human skulls or shoulder-blades, on fragments of skeletons heaped up by the side of public roads. It is the first sentence a child pronounces; like a perpetual murmur it resounds through cities and deserts alike; the caravans measure their steps by these mystic syllables. No other sound is heard from those bands of disciples who spend their lives in going

the round of the *Soumêru.** 'From the sea of Japan to the frontiers of Persia,' says a missionary,† 'a long and uninterrupted murmur agitates all people, animates all ceremonies, is the symbol of all beliefs, the accompaniment to all festivities. The trunk of the Buddhistic religion covers a great part of the world with its gigantic branches, and everywhere this prayer is the vehicle of its life and of the movements that animate it.'

Such a nihilism is revolting to us; for in our eyes life is worth living. But to the Hindu life is an evil; rest, non-existence, is the first of blessings. According to Buddhism, nothing exists except eternal nature, which manifests itself in two ways —existence (*pravritti*), and rest or non-being (*nirvritti*). The creation and the destruction of worlds and of individuals are the result of the infinite succession of these two states of nature. All compounds are perishable; deeds alone are eternal by their consequences. Animated beings,

* The northern part of the *Mêru* (the chief of mounts) as opposed to *Koumêru*, its southern part. The dimensions of that fabulous mountain are, according to the 'Vishnu Purâna,' in height 84,000 *yôjanas;* its depth below the surface of the earth is 16,000. Its diameter at the summit 32,000 *yôjanas;* and, at its base, 16,000; so that its shape is that of an inverted cone. The *yôjana* is, according to some, equivalent to nine miles; according to others, five only. Lieut.-Colonel Cunningham ('Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain,' 1843, No. 14) calculated its exact measure at seven miles.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

† L'Abbé Gabet, *Journal Asiatique*, May, 1847, p. 462 and following.

among which the highest is man, are capable, by their efforts, of attaining the supreme felicity of non-being, and of escaping the necessity of re-appearing in the fleeting phenomena of existence. One becomes Buddha when one has thus succeeded in proclaiming that nothing exists, in abdicating one's own individuality, in seeking nothing, not even rest, in acknowledging that all is vanity—even Buddha's law.* Then, free from all illusion, one enters upon a state of perfect indifference, in which pleasure and happiness become meaningless; a state of apathy in which physical life is almost reduced to the function of respiration, in which intellectual life consists in the continuance of pure intelligence, released from all its tasks. Seven degrees lead to that supreme end. Eliminating little by little all transient data, all conceptions of multiplicity and diversity, one must proclaim successively that there is no space, no intelligence, no ideas; even this is not sufficient, one must maintain that there is not even absence of ideas, nor absence of absence of ideas, and so on for ever. Nothingness has too much body for those worshippers of absolute void; they feel the necessity of denying it, like all the rest. It is the negation of negation.

The fundamental idea of Buddhism is the pre-eminence of man over all the rest of the universe. To come to life again as a god is an evil.† The

* E. Burnouf, 'Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' pp. 167, 168.

† *Ibid.*, p. 50.

great aim for all beings is to become men, and, that condition once obtained, to become monks.* The thought of the sage moves the earth; meditation creates the world; creations of worlds are the result of the behaviour of the moral beings who inhabit them,† not the work of a creating God. The *Bôdhisatva* Gadgadasvara plunges himself in such deep meditation, that all of a sudden eighty-four times a hundred thousand myriads of *kôtis*‡ of lotuses appear. Never was moral strength exaggerated to such an extent. Hell is created by sin. The most virtuous and the wisest is the mightiest. It is by his own strength that man rises above nature; he owes nothing but to himself.

Buddhistic books do indeed make mention of gods or *devas*. But these are beings like so many others, inferior to man—kinds of elves or goblins, without any metaphysical signification, from which, owing to their complete ignorance of physics, the Buddhists were unable to free themselves. The first step to becoming the guide of the world is to refuse to acknowledge the gods.§ The gods come

* E. Burnouf, 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 368.

† Since, according to Buddhistic metempsychosis, fresh incarnation is the punishment of misdeeds, and before entering a man's body (which is its only means of salvation) the soul must have migrated through the bodies of innumerable animals or plants.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

‡ According to Hindu numeration, the *kôti* is equal to ten millions.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

§ E. Burnouf, 'Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' p. 581.

respectfully to listen to Buddha and form his retinue; they are but one of the circles of transmigration; they die like men, and the *Bôdhisatva*, out of charity, becomes a *deva*, so as to preach to and convert the *devas*. It is the Buddha who teaches the *devas*, like all other beings, to cast off the burden of their nature and enter upon the great rest. Brahma himself, in order to obtain deliverance, needs the aid of Sakya. One of the most peculiar passages of the *Lalitavistâra* is that in which Sakya's parents desire to take him to the temple of the gods. Sakya begins to laugh; he reminds them that at his birth the gods have worshipped him. 'Where is the god equal or superior to me, who am the god of gods? He who belongs to a great race and carries the signs of nobility does not bow before gods, whoever they may be.' The gods approve that pride in the child, and say: 'The Mêru does not bow before the mustard-seed. The sun and the moon do not bow before the glow-worm.'*

In this manner beings pass through all the stages of the universe, until they arrive at the full control of themselves: it is the state of the *Bôdhisatva*, the last stage to be gone through before reaching nothingness. Then comes death, through which the Buddha is complete. Every million of years there appears a privileged being who teaches men the road to rest and the law by which to reach it. That law is not eternal. The successor

* Foucaux, 'Lalitavistâra,' pp. 114-116.

to Sakya-Mouni is already selected; it will be Maîtreya, who is now pursuing through a series of universes the course of his evolutions.

This masterpiece of human power is accomplished by science. The Buddha is the 'learned,' the 'gnostic,'* who, by his adequate science, breaks the spell of error, raises himself above nature, and commands it. He sees all in the thousands of worlds, as a piercing eye might see the fishes, the shells, the sand, and the aquatic plants at the bottom of a lake. 'In the same manner as the two parts forming a box are contained and limited by each other, so with the Buddha, the object of knowledge and the knowledge he possesses of it are contained by each other and within the same limits.' The *nirvâna* is the supreme equation, the endless intuition of absolute identity.

The questions which European criticism raises about the nature of the *nirvâna*, proceed from the discrepancy between the words and ideas of Hindu mythology and our own categories.† Is the *nirvâna* simply the release from outward circumstances? Is it a state in which man feels within himself but the universal existence in whose bosom co-exist all the parts of the uni-

* The word Buddha has exactly the same meaning as γνωστικός. I come more and more to think that gnosticism, particularly the gnosticism that we find in Plotinus, non-Christian gnosticism, is an offshoot of Buddhism.

† See especially E. Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 516 and following.

verse? In that state does man preserve the feeling of his personality and his activity? Is there any distinction between the *nirvâna* and absolute existence? Is it pure negation? Those questions are solved differently according to the different schools, or rather they are devoid of meaning for Buddhists, who are quite astonished when questioned on that subject. 'The *nirvâna*,' they invariably reply, 'is absorption, deliverance from movement, release from the control of causes and effects, rest—that is, non-being.' The circle is complete when one can say: 'Existence exists no more for me; I shall never see another existence.' The *nirvâna* is immunity from being, absolute void, the space wanting its four dimensions, wherefrom are excluded both the existence and the non-existence of things, where are seen neither objects to be admitted nor subjects to admit them, where all principles are put aside, because the illusory character of every principle leads to none being admitted—in a word, it is the negation of both the subject and the object, and consequently it is absolute rest. To reach that state, human intellect must be freed from all that may perturb it; all emotions are to be avoided; all pursuits are to be given up; all intellectual discussions relative to the qualities of things are to be waived; all wishes and desires are to be foregone; mirth and sadness are alike to be put away. The being that has attained

this summit, whose ideas are unfettered—having cast off the burden of thought—having severed the ties that bound it to the universe, and completely mastered its own inward self—having reached a unity similar to the uniform surface of the firmament—having entered upon the meditation called 'the place of endless meditation,'* of all the functions of life preserves but respiration. 'It is a mind contemplative, perfected, purified, luminous, free from blots, exempt from vice, supple, capable of any deed, stable, arrived at impassibility.'

The aim of life is therefore to withdraw one's self from the intellectual and moral condition of mankind by meditation, or rather by the fantastic exercise of imagination. The legend of the dried-up *Arhân*, in 'Hiouen-Thsang,'† is characteristic of that complete desiccation of the being which, for the Buddhist, constitutes perfection.

'Two hundred *li*‡ west from the capital, there is a great mountain bristling with bold and steep rocks, on the top of which rises a *stoûpa*.§ This is what tradition says:

* E. Burnouf, 'Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' p. 3.

† Stanislas Julien, 'Histoire de Hiouen-Thsang,' p. 275 and following.

‡ The *li* is a Chinese topographical measure; its value was, in Hiouen-Thsang's time, equal to the distance which an average man can walk in five minutes. Five *li* are equal to 1643 metres, or a little more than the English mile (1609 metres).—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

§ *Stoûpa*, a shrine.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

'Several hundred years ago, the thunder roared and destroyed part of the mountain, the grottoes of which sheltered a *bhikchou** of extraordinary size, who was seated with his eyes closed; his hair and his beard, falling in thick locks, covered his shoulders and his face. Some wood-fellers went to inform the king of the occurrence; and he hastened to go to look at him, and do him homage. The news having spread, the magistrates and the people—an immense crowd—rushed from all parts to do homage to the *bhikchou*, who was soon surrounded by heaps of flowers.

'"Who is this man?" inquired the king. "He is," answered a monk, "a *lo-han* (*arhân*) who has left his family, and who, having extinguished the principle of thought, has entered upon complete ecstasy. Since then, many years have elapsed. That is why his hair has grown so wonderfully long." "How can we wake him, and make him get up?" inquired the king. "When a man," said the monk, "comes out of ecstasy, after having for many long years been deprived of food, his body will soon fall into decomposition. We must first moisten him with cream and milk, so as to lubricate his muscles. Afterwards, we shall strike the gong, in order to startle and rouse him."

'In accordance with the monk's advice, the

* A hermit, and more especially a religious mendicant.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

corpse was at once besprinkled with milk, and the gong was struck. The *arhân* opened his eyes, and, looking around, asked: "Who are you all wearing religious garments?" "We are *bhikchous*," they all replied. "Where is now," retorted the *arhân*, "my master Kia-che-po-jou-laï (Kaçyapatathagata)?" "It is a long, long time," they answered, "since he entered upon the *nie-pan* (*nirvâna*)."

'Upon hearing these words, he gave a cry of pain; then he went on: "Did Chi-kia-wen-fo (Sakya-Mouni Buddha) succeed in reaching complete, unsurpassed intelligence?" "Yes, indeed; and, after procuring happiness for all creatures, he entered upon silence and extinction."

'Hearing this, the *arhân** cast his eyes down; then, after a long pause, he raised his long hair with his hand, and rose majestically in the air. Then, by a divine miracle, appeared a fiery orb, which consumed his body, and his bones fell on the ground. The king and the monks of the great assembly gathered his relics together and erected a *stoûpa*. It is the mound of which we have been speaking.'

Materialism, scepticism, atheism—this, then, is the summary of what may be called the Buddhism of the books. It is, indeed, the only instance in the history of mankind of negation assuming a religious import. When Father Horace

* A person holding a high rank in Buddhistic hierarchy.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

inquired from the Buddhists of Thibet 'What is God?' they imperturbably replied: 'God is the Assembly of Saints.' An atheistic philosophy has founded a religious tradition unequalled as regards its duration and the number of its adherents.

This fact of atheism becoming a religion is so truly amazing that we require the best authority on the subject before accepting it. The cautious mind of Eugène Burnouf did not fear to express the most decided affirmation with regard to it.* 'I imagine,' says he, 'that on entering upon religious life Sakya-Mouni started from the ideas furnished by the atheistic doctrines of the Samkhya, which were in ontology, the absence of God, the multiplicity and eternity of human souls; and, in physics, the existence of an eternal nature, endowed with qualities, transforming itself, and possessing the elements of the shapes assumed by the soul of man in the course of its journey through the world. From that doctrine Sakya-Mouni borrowed the idea of the non-existence of God, as well as the theory of the multiplicity of human souls, that of transmigration, and that of the *nirvâna*, or deliverance, which last belonged in common to all Brahminic schools. But it is not easy to see to-day what he understood by the *nirvâna*, as he nowhere defines it. Yet, as he never speaks of God, the *nirvâna* could not have

* 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien," pp. 520, 521.

meant to him the absorption of the individual soul in the bosom of a universal God, as understood by orthodox Brahmins; and as he does not mention matter, his *nirvâna* cannot mean the dissolution of the human soul into physical elements. The word *void*, which appears already on the monuments which are proved to have been the oldest, induces me to think that Sakya saw supreme good in complete annihilation of the principle of thought. He pictured it to himself, to use an often repeated comparison, as the gradual extinction of the light in a lamp which is going out.'

The *void* — this is, indeed, the key-word of Buddhism. To understand the void is the supreme science. Meditation is the aim of life; but meditation is to know 'that the law is void, does not exist, is not coming, has not been, is inexpressible.'* The Sûtra of causes, which Burnouf translated from beginning to end,† and in which may be seen the type of Buddha's teachings, is like a machine destined to produce a vacuum in the soul, by pointing out birth as the sole cause of all evils. Buddha shall deliver from birth the innumerable beings subject to be born by their nature. Having completely freed created beings from old age, from death, from disease, from corruption, from despair, from miseries, from anxieties, having taken them across the ocean of migratory life, he shall place them in the region

* Eugène Burnouf's 'Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' p. 169.

† *Ibid.*, Appendix to the 'Lotus,' p. 534 and following.

of imperishable nature, happy, without fear, exempt from trouble and pain, calm, free from passion and death.*

'No more attached to anything than the dew-drop to the lotus-leaf; prizing gold no more than a lump of earth; considering infinite space and the palm of the hand as equal; having the same indifference for sandal-wood and the hatchet that chops it; turning his back upon existence, gain, honours—the Buddha sees as it is the reunion of the three worlds. This world, to his eyes, is not created and does not die; it does not disappear and does not come to life; it does not revolve in the circle of transmigration, and does not enter upon complete annihilation; we cannot say that it has been, nor that it has not been; it is not existing and it is not non-existing; it is not thus, yet it is not otherwise; it is not erroneously, yet it is not really; it is not otherwise and it is not thus. It is in this way that the Buddha perceives the reunion of the three worlds.'†

Of all this nothing belongs peculiarly to Buddhism. Let us recall the definition of the state of liberation according to Nyaya: 'The state of liberation is like the state of perfect insensibility of a man soundly sleeping, undisturbed by any dreams.'‡

Thus, for Hinduism as for Christianity, the per-

* E. Foucaux's 'Lalitavistâra,' p. 215.

† E. Burnouf's 'Lotus,' p. 193.

‡ *Journal des Savants*, June, 1853, p. 342.

ception of the vanity of all things is the beginning of wisdom; but after 'all is vanity,' Buddhism, having no Supreme God, cannot add, like the author of the 'Imitation,' 'except loving and serving God.' In Buddhistic legends, nearly all conversions are due to the sight of something horrible.* A short time after his marriage, the young Sakya is taking a walk in his pleasure-garden. He meets with an old man. The *Bôdhisatva*, perceiving him, says to his coachman:† 'Who is this, coachman? What is the meaning of this weak and undersized creature, with dried-up flesh, with muscles stuck to his skin, with white hair, chattering teeth, thin and shrivelled-up body, who, leaning on a stick, totters painfully along?' The coachman answers: 'My lord, that man is overburdened with age; his senses are weakened, suffering has destroyed his energy, he is despised by his relations, and without a guide; useless in business, he is abandoned in the forest like a heap of dead wood.' The *Bôdhisatva* retorts: 'Is that the rule in his family, or is it that of all the creatures of this world? Speak! tell me quickly what the fact is. Having been informed of its significance, I will reflect upon the origin of all this.' The coachman replies: 'My lord, it is

* Read the touching episodes of Kûnala and Vitaçôka in Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' pp. 404 and following, 415 and following; as also the strange vision of the cemetery in Foucaux's 'Lalitavistâra,' p. 197 and following.

† Foucaux's 'Lalitavistâra,' pp. 182, 183.

neither the law of his family, nor that of the kingdom. With every creature youth will be vanquished by age. Your father, your mother, the crowd of your relations and kinsmen will end by being old; there is no other end for created beings.' The *Bôdhisatva* says: 'Then, coachman, young and ignorant beings, of unsound judgment, proud of the youth which intoxicates them, do not foresee old age. As for me, I will depart. Turn my carriage quickly. If I also am destined to grow old, what have I to do with joy and pleasure? Go back; I will think of how to achieve deliverance.'

All this is indeed a true fruit of India, that country where life is in turn a golden dream and a nightmare, a sombre hell and a dazzling paradise. Voluptuousness and abnegation are near neighbours. The ascetic who, haunted by the fear of existence, inflicts torments upon himself in order to escape it, does not belong to another race than he who acts according to Krishna's voluptuous legend. Krishna, incarnation of pleasure and sensual abandonment, ideal of a mild, unenergetic people, exposed to all the seductions of nature, is, at heart, brother to Sakya-Mouni. The frolics of Krishna with the shepherdesses of the Bradj have something in common with the enervating abnegations of Buddhism; both imply complete ignorance of the true aim of life, or rather a false idea of science and the powers of man. For India, conscious existence has no superior *resulting power;*

everybody is free, according to his taste, to find it delightful as an idyl, or dreadful as the torture-chamber. According to us, the world, through the reason, the activity, the suffering of man, pursues an ideal end of justice and righteousness. The most victimized of creatures has helped, if only by its tears, to raise an eternal structure; it has a ground for hope and consolation.

In speaking of Buddhism, one may appear paradoxical, though only bringing together the plainest texts. This frightful nihilism, which would seem among us the height of impiety, issues in a very lofty morality. This strange Messiah speaks of the kingdom of God almost like the Galilean Messiah. 'My abode is the strength of charity; my garment is the robe of patience; the void is my seat; it is from that seat I teach the law to all creatures.'* The name of the supreme virtue of Buddhism, *maîtri*, can only be translated by the word 'charity.' Self-sacrifice and devotion carried even to suicide, heroic almsgiving, such are the most salient features of all the legends relating to Sakya-Mouni. Once he sacrifices the ten thousand heads he has possessed in previous existences; at another time, he cuts off his hand, his feet, his head, to give them to some unfortunates. It is out of compassion for creatures that he, for the last time, accepts the condition of humanity. He constantly repeats the maxim, 'Delivered, deliver; having crossed to the other side,

* E. Burnouf's 'Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' p. 144.

help others to cross it; consoled, console others; having entered upon complete *nirvâna*, enable others to attain it.'* The demon tempts him by offering him the *nirvâna* at once; he refuses until, by his preaching, he has saved the beings placed under the control of birth, age, disease and death.

Like a father who sees his children playing in a house already on fire, the Buddha sees his creatures burnt, consumed, devoured by birth, death, lamentations, despair—the prey of desires and the evils which result from them, unceasingly coming to life in hell and in the womb of animals, doomed to pass through the state of gòds and men; and, in the midst of that accumulation of trials and sufferings, they play, divert, enjoy themselves—they do not tremble, do not think how wretched and miserable they are. Then the Buddha says to himself: 'I am the father of all these beings; I want to deliver them; I will give them the incomparable blessing of science.' And he calls out to them: 'Do not amuse yourselves in the midst of all those shapes, those sounds, those odours, those tastes, those miserable contacts; for, while attached to this world, you are consumed by the thirst accompanying the five sorts of desire.' Blinded by their pleasures and pursuits, men refuse to believe him and to follow him out of the house which is in flames. The Buddha has recourse to stratagems; he entices

* Legend of Pûrna in Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 248 and following.

them by means of toys, which are the various stages of his law, and the more or less tangible shapes which it assumes to accommodate itself to human weakness.

Here certainly is the lofty side of Buddhism. This atheistic religion has been eminently moral and beneficial. It is catholicism without God. India knows no measure, in self-devotion or in anything else. She has gone to the extreme. One cannot help smiling at the efforts of the Buddha to convert serpents, birds, vampires, harpies, and all the fantastic beings with which Indian imagination has peopled the world. But that spirit of sympathy was the cause of the extraordinary proselytism which inspired Buddhistic missionaries, and with which the conquests of monotheistic religions can alone be compared. Brahminism, the doctrines of Zoroaster and of Confucius, only had national destinies.* Sakya-Mouni's apostles, on the contrary, believed that the world must become Buddhistic, and in this they were but half deceived. The least satisfactory doctrine which man ever dreamed of, captivated the most diverse countries. A religion which seemed only intended for the most refined sceptics —the least intelligible, the least consoling of all religions—became the creed of races most uncouth till then. The gentle manners of those pious

* Brahminism made proselytes beyond India (see further on p. 162 and following), but their number does not bear comparison with those of Buddhism.

atheists, and the generally urbane character of their preaching, were the cause of their popularity. The Vedas, severe and exclusive, could never have succeeded in performing such miracles. The people embrace a religion only for its outward appearance. Few are theologians. It is not religious metaphysics that give efficiency to propaganda. The affability and the kindness of those good monks threw a veil over their philosophy, a philosophy of which they themselves were perhaps scarcely aware. In like manner, Krishna's success must be ascribed to his meek and sympathetic physiognomy. That amiable and charming shepherd supplanted the austere Mouni, and proved once more that the gods of the Mêru, like those of Olympus, were not eternal gods.

III.

The foundation of a religion is an historical rather than a doctrinal fact. The clear perception we have of Buddhistic philosophy hardly explains its establishment. The character of its founder is enveloped in obscurity. On the other hand, the circumstances attending the birth of the new school are easily understood. At Benares, on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna, probably in the course of the fifth century before Christ, arose the doctrine which openly proclaimed its programme to be the deliverance of mankind from the tyranny of desire. It long remained an

obscure sect, a platonic protest in favour of religious equality, an order of mendicant friars among many others. It only assumed a political importance when, towards the middle of the third century before Christ, King Açoka accepted as laws the principles which, till then, had only been objects of meditation for a few ascetics.

It is absolutely beyond doubt that Buddhism was the offspring of a vast movement of philosophical sects. With the speculative power always alive in her, India had discussed all problems, tried all sorts of solutions. The movement was at first limited to the higher classes; gradually it stirred the masses. A theory at last obtained great popularity; it seemed to solve most satisfactorily the eternal question of being and life in the universe. Sakya adopted it most decidedly; but he does not appear to have invented it. The world is perpetually changing; all beings go through successive forms of existence; deeds alone are eternal and transmitted from life to life. Existence is thus but a trial, a kind of purgatory, from which we are freed by annihilation, which keeps us from the law of change. Sakya, or rather his disciples, promised to take men through the defiles of existence. 'Begin by leaving your family,' they said to the adept; 'apply yourself to Buddha's law; annihilate the army of death, as an elephant upsets a hut of reeds. He who shall, undisturbed, walk according to the dictates of that law, escaping birth and the revolutions of the

world, will put an end to pain. The law of miserable existence is closed to him; the pure road to heaven is opened to him; he has reached the other shore of the sea of trouble.'

It would be an error to believe that the part played by Sakya-Mouni required great originality. Sakya was a hermit like many others, a philosopher like many others, having certain practices and a mode of teaching of his own. He did not admit the extravagant mortifications of the Brahmins; he used to seat himself comfortably, and recommended that condition as necessary for rest; he was dressed decently, and strongly blamed the acts of the *gymnosophists*,* whose sole garment was space. With as much truth as of Jesus, we may say of Sakya-Mouni that what we know best about him is his way of speaking. The form of teaching adopted by Sakya is pretty faithfully preserved in the Sutras; it was a kind of animated conversation, analogous to the dialectic of Socrates, in which the master gradually brought his hearer to acknowledge the negation of all and the infinite chain of causes; it was long, diffuse, full of repetitions and beating about the bush, such as oral teaching requires. The speech was interspersed with parables set forth in a style easy, popular, expressive, and touching. From all this resulted a certain character of mediocrity, an absence of literary artifice, that inaugurated a revolution

* From the Greek γυμνοσοφιστης, a sect of Indian philosophers.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

similar to that which the plain, simple, and clear language of the New Testament brought about among the Græco-Latin peoples. At the outset, a new religion is often but a new kind of literature. Mahomet was indebted for his success to the revolution he caused in Arabian eloquence by the rhymed prose of his Koran.

In the process of popularization, every advance is a fall. It has often been remarked that our modern tongues, so inferior in beauty to ancient languages, are far better adapted to the expression of popular feelings, and correspond with the advent of Christianity, by which moral culture, till then the appanage of a select few, was made accessible to all. Classical stiffness gave way. The new-born child wanted gruel; the strong meat of antiquity did not agree with it. When ideas spread, they lose their grandeur. But the eternal mind, which takes advantage of all circumstances, knows how to derive from these recoils sufficient force to make a fresh leap.

Castes formed the basis of Hindu society. Originally instituted as an heroic precaution for preserving the thin streamlet of Aryan blood in the midst of an ocean of Allophylian * races, caste had brought about this result: the Brahmin was the only religious being. The masses had thus to labour under the most painful sense of inferiority; they were considered as having no

* From the Greek ἄλλος=another, and φυλή=a tribe.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

souls, and, as a matter of course, requiring no salvation. From that resulted an aristocracy, the proudest of all—the aristocracy of meditation; birth exclusively conferred religious capacity. The mere fact of Sakya being a Kchatria, not a Brahmin, dealt a mortal blow to that system. Another fact of no less importance was that truths which until then had been the privilege of certain classes were made current coin. Discussions, which the Brahmins confined to the higher circles of society, were thus placed within the reach of the masses. Sakya spoke to all in a familiar language, clear, prolix, more analytical yet less learned than classical Sanscrit. The law of religions is, indeed, the same as that of languages. They constantly, so to speak, lose their nobleness, and become democratic. The most insipid legend is always the most modern, being made for the greater number. Sakya turned everything to account. Like most reformers, he sought his followers amongst the dregs of society. He beckoned to the humble and the sinners. He was often reproached with showing preference for the miserable and the criminal. A young Brahmin, whom his father never could teach to read the Vedas, became an excellent disciple of Sakya. Buddhism was thus an easy sort of devotion, readily accepted by feeble minds, as by those who feared the yoke of caste and the difficulties of Brahminical studies. The criticisms of the Buddhists upon the Brahmins and their worldly ways remind us of the attitude

taken, in the Middle Ages, by the pious aristocracy of mendicant friars towards the haughty ways of the official clergy.

But it was chiefly owing to the influence it exercised over the poor and the unhappy that Buddhism succeeded. Numerous texts testify that beggars embraced the new sect as a means of livelihood. The ascetic's robe raised them in their own eyes, restored their self-esteem. In an Indian comedy, an unlucky gambler consoles himself by remarking that he still has the resource of becoming a Buddhist. 'Then,' says he, 'will I walk, with head erect, on the highroad.' The fact of a slave embracing the religious life liberated him. Numbers of legends signify that it is much easier for the poor than for the rich to attain faith. A god, wishing to become a monk, complains of his exalted condition. 'For,' says he, 'it is difficult to embrace the religious life, if one comes of a lofty race; but it is easy if of low extraction.' A sudden misfortune also often occasions some striking conversion, which makes a saint of a worldling.

The revolution with which Sakya's name is associated was therefore a revolution in favour of equality. 'For an invitation or a marriage,' says Açoka, 'the caste is inquired into; not so when it is a question of the law; for virtues cause us to fulfil the law, and they care not about the caste.' It was from Sakya's lips or from those of his disciples that India heard for the first time these

words: 'My law is one of grace and mercy for all. And what is a law of grace and mercy for all? It is one under which such wretched beggars as Durâgata can become monks.'* When the king, Buddha's father, wishes to give him a wife, he causes the qualities expected from the young bride to be proclaimed, adding: 'Whether the young woman be of royal or Brahminical blood, of Vaicya or Coudra† race, is of no importance. My son does not prize either family or race; real and moral qualities, such are the desires of his heart.'‡

It is, therefore, easy to understand among which class Buddha at first recruited his adherents, as also the opposition he met with. The caste which had possessed the monopoly of religious things could not see without wrath its privilege transferred to people of the lowest conditions. One day Ananda, Sakya-Mouni's servant, wandering through the country, meets a young girl drawing water. He asks her to let him drink. The young girl informs him that, being of the caste of the Tchandalas, she may defile him by her contact. 'I do not, sister, inquire about thy caste or thy family,' replies Ananda. 'I merely ask thee for water, if thou art willing to give me

* E. Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 198.

† Vaicya, trading class, *bourgeoisie.* Coudra, belonging to the lower classes—the class of servants.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

‡ Foucaux's 'Lalitavistāra,' p. 133.

some.' Prâkriti (such is her name) feels herself enamoured at once of Ananda. Taking advantage of the circumstance, Sakya, by a series of double-meaning questions, which Prâkriti interprets in the sense of her passion, prepares her heart. Finally the young girl sees her error, and declares herself resolved upon entering into religious life.

It is not that the first founders of Buddhism had the slightest idea of political reform. They aimed at substituting for a religious class a body equally religious, recruited from all classes. They admitted the political consequences of caste, and only rejected its religious consequences. But it was hard not to slip from the one to the other. How was it possible to maintain in social inferiority those with whom they professed entire community of religious interests? Other philosophers, Kapila and Patandjali, had, before Sakya, attempted to substitute individual asceticism for the practices of the Vedas, reserved exclusively to the Brahmins. On the whole, the latter alone were the losers by these revolutions. The distinction between other classes was as marked as in the past. But the Brahmins could not bear that any beggar should become their equal, and that they themselves should be subjected to noviciate and investitures like others, in order to obtain that which till then they only owed to their birth. That is why the objections of the Brahmins to Buddhism are neither theological nor

philosophical; they are purely political. Buddhism was sapping the very foundations of Indian society; it had, therefore, to be vanquished, or the old society must fall to pieces. Social institutions proved the strongest, and Buddhism disappeared from India without leaving any recollection. The castes offered an invincible resistance. Even to the present day they oppose a powerful obstacle to Christianity, which in India has only succeeded in winning over a few pariahs.

Women were also indebted to Buddhism for a momentary amelioration of their fate. The new religion gave them religious importance. They were permitted to embrace monastic life, and to practise the same rule as men. No doubt they preserved notable inferiority; they could not directly arrive at the state of Buddha, but they were enabled to reach that state by being born again as men. The female sex thus continued to be a punishment. In the state of perfection there will be no women. The miracle of a change of sex is pretty frequent in Buddhistic legends. The accomplished woman becomes man. That is what happened to Sugâta's daughter, who achieved perfection, recognised the equality of all laws and of all beings, and was always animated by thoughts of charity and compassion for all creatures. At the sight of all the worlds she caused the signs of her sex to disappear. Transformed into a *bôdhisatva*, she seated herself beneath the tree of intelligence, and entered into supreme rest.

Were there originally laymen in the sect? Mr. Hodgson is in favour of the negative.* He thinks that, at the beginning, to be a Buddhist meant to embrace the religious state, to make vows of chastity and mendicity. But that rule did not last long. In the earliest legends *upasakas* —that is, believers or devotees—kings, merchants, etc., are spoken of. But the monks alone are 'disciples,' properly speaking. At first vagabonds, living under the trees or in huts of branches, they used to spend the rainy season among the rich, devoting their time to preaching or meditation. The rains over, they assembled again, and formed a council, conferring between themselves on the subject of their meditations. That was the origin of the convent or *vihara*. At first mere temporary shelters in the woods, without which modesty would have taken alarm at the total absence of enclosures, the *viharas* soon became roomy structures, little different from our mediæval monasteries, and where the separation of the sexes was rigorously observed.

Judging by its primitive texts, Buddhism appears like a simple doctrine, without mythology, devoid of worship, giving scope to unlimited freedom of thought. 'There are few creeds,' says Burnouf, 'based upon so small a number of dogmas, and imposing fewer sacrifices on common-

* See Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 281 and following.

sense.'* Buddhism did not do away with vulgar mythology; it made it subordinate, by establishing the belief that man can attain all his aims by his merits alone, and that upon reaching the state of Buddha, he rises far above the gods. To offer prayers to the *devas* is sheer puerility. 'It is a belief generally admitted in the world that prayers addressed to the gods secure the birth of either sons or daughters; but it is not so, otherwise everybody would have a hundred sons, all of them sovereign monarchs.'† The gods are pitilessly sacrificed to the Buddha. And the Buddha is neither a god, nor the incarnation of a god. He is a man; he is 'the hermit of the Sakya's family'—a king's son become a monk. His superiority in virtue and science alone commends him to the people. Like all beings, he has revolved within the circle of transmigration; it is he who will deliver the gods themselves from their divinity.

Thus in primitive Buddhism the gods are but useless inventions, simply destined to satisfy the need felt by the imagination of peopling space. Monotheism is, however, so natural an inclination of the human mind, that the religion of atheism had to give way before it. This is one of the most curious evolutions of religious history. It was in Nepâl and in Thibet, about the tenth

* See Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 336.

† Ibid., p. 132 and following.

century of our era, that, according to Cosma de Cörös, was effected this transformation of atheism into theism, by the creation of an Adi-Buddha or supreme Buddha, sole god and creator, quite analogous with Brahma. Nothing could have been more opposed to the doctrine of early Buddhism, according to which every being exists by its own nature, *svabhâvât.** The *bôdhisatva* Avalokiteçvara became for other sects a supreme being, a kind of tutelary god, object of materialistic worship. Mandjuçri, another *bôdhisatva*, became also the cause of a whole polytheistic and mythological development. The Nepâlese are Moguls; they could not, like the Hindus, content themselves with metaphysics, and live without demiurgust and incarnations. This was unavoidable as soon as the most refined production of Hindu thought was transferred to races quite incapable of appreciating it. What could those rough hands grasp of the light texture of dreams woven by the mystics from the banks of the Ganges? Popular child's-play, which the Hindu founders did not care to eliminate; chimerical beings, *pretas*, hells invented to terrify the weakest minds. Having begun with pure negation, Buddhism must thus drift into the most

* E. Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' pp. 120, 121.

† From the Greek δημιουργὸς, an ancient philosophical expression, the name given by the Platonists to the creating intelligence.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

unrestrained superstition. The needs of the human heart resumed the ascendant; the influence of Çivaïsm gave access to all mythological complications. Gods and goddesses, at first reduced to nominal importance, regained all their influence by the *tantras*, in much the same way as, with Christianity, the worship of saints was the revenge of paganism, at first so strictly checked by Jewish-Christian puritanism. At the same time, moral character disappears, religion consists only in turning the wheel, making statuettes of Buddha, and offering flowers to the statuettes. Pious Buddhists spend their lives in counting the revolutions of the prayer-wheel, calculating chimerical numbers, and beating drums in order to drive away the demons.* All is pure idolatry.†

It is worthy of notice that this only occurs in the north. In Ceylon, in Ava, in Siam, these puerilities did not prevail. It may appear singular that the *tantric* system, being so superstitious, should at the same time be theistic or monotheistic. Yet it has neither become more practical nor lost any of its nihilism. Putting implicit confidence in magical formulæ looked upon as infallible means of salvation,‡ Nepalese Buddhism has neverthe-

* The Tao-tse themselves no longer understand Lao-Tsen's metaphysics; their religion now consists only in outward practices.

† In Persia, *bot* has become synonymous with idol. *Bot-kédels* is equivalent to 'pagoda.'

‡ It is thus that the name of *chamanism*, that is, the grossest witchcraft—is connected with Buddhism (*chaman* = *çramâna*).

less fallen into the most extravagant quietism. 'To the ascetic, an enemy or himself, his wife or his daughter, his mother or a prostitute, are the same thing.' India baffles all the inductions drawn from the experience of the rest of mankind. She seems intended to give the lie to the most undoubted psychological laws. People were at first struck by the outward analogies between Buddhism and Catholicism. They are, no doubt, real; yet it is evident that the doctrinal starting-points of these two religions were as far apart as possible. In religious history, it is prudent not to assign any rule to the combinations brought about by centuries. Everything is possible; opposite poles will often meet; extremes will produce similar effects. The negation of the very existence of morality brought forth the height of devotion; atheism produced a legend full of an ineffable sentiment of gentleness and benevolence; nihilism produced small terrestrial paradises of sweet and happy life.* Even in our days the sight of a lamasery exercises a powerful attraction and an invincible charm over the most ill-disposed minds.

* See specially the last scenes in the life of Hiouen-Thsang, translated by M. Julien.

IV.

Strange it is that the two countries where Buddhism had its greatest success, China and Japan, are precisely those which seemed least prepared to receive from India the good tidings of salvation. Religious sterility often disposes to credulity. Races and individuals wanting in religious originality are often predestined to believe and to accept anything.

Among the contrasts offered by the infinite variety of the human mind, that existing between India and China is perhaps the most striking, and the most likely to show in how many divers proportions the intellectual and moral faculties which compose our nature may be combined. Contrary qualities and defects never established between two races a more complete disagreement. During the four or five thousand years which comprise her history, China offers us the unique spectacle of a society founded upon a purely human basis, without a prophet, without a messiah, without a revealer, without a mythology—of a society solely calculated for temporal welfare and the good organization of this world. As for India, she offers the equally surprising spectacle of an exclusively speculative race, living only for the ideal, building its religion and its literature in the clouds, without any mixture of historical or real elements. The characteristic feature of the Chinese mind is the negation of the supernatural: what

it cannot understand does not exist for it.* Confucius, the incarnation of Chinese genius, is but an economist and a moralist; it is said that, when his disciples turned the conversation to divine matters, he used to keep silent or get out of the difficulty with this ironical query: 'Do you know earthly things so well that you trouble yourselves about heavenly ones?' As for India, lost in the contemplation of the infinite, she exhausted her activity in the creation of an exuberant mythology and of numberless systems of metaphysics, without ever deeming the study of nature, of man, of history worthy of a moment's thought. Simple, lucid, industrial, Chinese literature from immemorial times appears to us with the character of the most positive, or, as the expression runs, the most utilitarian epoch. India has to this day been unable to extricate herself from the infinite maze of her systems and fables; one of the greatest mythological poems—the 'Prem-Sagar' of Brahminism, bears date 1804. China is undoubtedly of all countries that whose ancient records are best preserved; she possesses, dynasty after dynasty, and almost year after year, the official documents of her history, the decrees of her sovereigns, the rules of her administration, from the twelfth century before the Christian era.

* Even in St. Francis Xavier's time, the missionaries used to experience the greatest difficulty in finding a Chinese word corresponding with the idea of God; some years ago the Biblical Society experienced similar difficulties.

India, so prodigiously fecund in everything else, does not possess one single line of history. She has come down to our days without thinking reality worth the trouble of being consigned to writing. From the earliest antiquity China gives the model of a constitution based on learning and reason, admitting no other privileges but those conferred by instruction and merit tested by competitive examination; if the problem of social organization could be solved by reason alone, China would have solved it three thousand years ago. India never could rise above the most elementary political institutions; the caste, under its most severe and absolute form, remains even in our days the basis of society. And all this is easily explained: the present life is for the Chinese the end of human activity; for the Indian it is an episode in the series of existences, a passage between two eternities. On the one side is the race of the finite: respectable, reasonable, narrow as common sense; on the other the race of the infinite: dreamy, distracted, led astray by imagination. Their physical characteristics themselves present a no less striking contrast. The oblique and shining eyes, the flattened nose, the thick-set body, the vulgar air of the Chinese, indicate a shrewd and sensible man, well acquainted with the things of this world; the noble form of the Indian, his high stature, his large and calm forehead, his deep and quiet eyes, proclaim a race born for meditation, and destined by its

very aberrations to show the extent of the speculative power of mankind.

Yet—who will credit it?—it is in China, among this race devoid of metaphysics, or mythology; almost without poetry, that one of India's boldest and most original conceptions found an asylum, and secured the largest number of adherents. Buddhism became contagious among the races which seemed least accessible to it. That fantastically strange religion, holding out to man annihilation as the supreme end, pointing out as the height of perfection the moment when, having succeeded in shaking off the bad dream of existence, he arrives at a state where there is no longer thought or absence of thought, desire or absence of desire; that exaggeration of Indian genius, overwhelming to India herself, since she had no rest until she succeeded in banishing it from her bosom, excited ardent mysticism in thousands of Chinese. Want of originality betrays itself by the ready acceptance of all doctrines, even the most antipathetic. Deficient in religious invention, the Chinese, with regard to foreign creeds, presented a sort of *tabula rasa*, whereon any doctrine might be inscribed. Docility is often only a sign of want of individuality; and a religion never finds easier acceptance than among those who, to embrace it, have not to renounce any previous habit of mind. Hence the astonishing success of Buddhism with the races of Central and Eastern Asia; for them the new creed satisfied a want

and supplied an omission in their moral constitution. Hence also that miraculous transformation by which a selfish and non-idealistic race became, under the influence of the new creed, devout, credulous, full of faith, charmingly sensitive—in one word, pious; those very Chinese who, owing to the want of that groundwork of spirituality indispensable to Christians, were destined, later, to reject Christianity!

Nowhere does this fact, so important in the history of the human mind, appear with more originality than in the very curious work which M. Stanislas Julien has brought before the public.* It is the biography of a Chinese Buddhist of the seventh century of our era, whom the ardour of his piety brought, like many more of his co-religionists, to the country sanctified by Sakya-Mouni's preaching. Since the introduction of Buddhism in China numbers of Chinese, we know, undertook pilgrimages to India, in order to study the Buddha's doctrine, to visit the places made famous by his miracles, and to seek for more complete texts of the canonical books. With the accuracy and precision which is in all things the main feature of the Chinese nation, these pilgrims on their return often wrote accounts of their travels, either for the edification of their readers, or to serve the political purposes of the

Hiouen-Thsang's Life and Voyages in India, from the year 618 down to 645,' translated from the Chinese by M. Stanislas Julien. Paris, 1853.

Celestial Empire. Hence sprang a class of writings of peculiar interest, especially if we consider the complete uncertainty which for us surrounds Indian chronology, and the obligation resting on us to supply, by foreign testimony, the omissions of India as regards her own history. Thus the six narratives of this kind handed down to us at once attracted the attention of the first scholars who dealt with Buddhism. A man on whose character it is perhaps permissible to reserve one's judgment, but whose lofty range of mind cannot be doubted by anyone—M. Abel Remusat — perceived the immense interest of these curious relations. He translated the most ancient of all—that of Fabian, who started on his pilgrimage in the year 399 of our era. But several reasons precluded the work of that eminent orientalist from attaining all the desired perfection. The chief of those reasons was no doubt the impossibility of recognising at that time, under the Chinese transcriptions, the corresponding Indian proper names. The monosyllabic vocalization of the Chinese tongue is, indeed, so very different from that of all other languages, particularly from that of the rich and full sound of Sanscrit, that Indian names, mutilated and disfigured in that strange process of transcription, become quite unrecognisable. Besides which, strange abbreviations often complicate the difficulty; thus, 'Buddha' is reduced to 'Fo' (for 'Fotho'), and 'Brahma' to 'Fan' (for 'Fan-lan-mo'). It is

easy to understand that, for want of a rule enabling us to detect these deviations of sound, all attempts to translate Chinese works relative to India could only result in a barbarous and often unintelligible text. Chinese translators are, indeed, in the habit of preserving untranslated a crowd of Sanscrit words, such as titles of books, names of plants, and terms considered sacramental or mysterious. At other times, on the contrary, instead of transcribing proper names, they translate them into Chinese equivalents in much the same way as if *Theodorus* were rendered by 'God-given' (*Dieu-donné*). What, for instance, could we learn from the mention on each page of the King Wou-yeou ('free from sorrow') if we were not aware of that word being the literal translation of Açoka's name, so famous in the annals of Buddhism? M. Stanislas Julien has traced the most secret laws of these singular transformations by an ingenious and safe method, which, in his preface, he explains with great lucidity. He has thus enriched philology with a new and highly important instrument, without which all Chinese texts relative to India must have remained a dead letter.

Hiouen-Thsang, the Buddhist pilgrim with whose life and voyages we are acquainted through M. Stanislas Julien, started on his long peregrinations in the year 629 of our era, and returned to his country in the year 645. At that time Buddhism was already in decadence in India. In

several places Hiouen-Thsang found the monasteries abandoned; the town of Kapilavastou, Sakya-Mouni's birthplace, was but a heap of ruins when he visited it. In the eyes of the Chinese, however, India was still the country of Buddhistic orthodoxy, the privileged land which pious souls longed to visit, as much to collect the teachings of the most venerated masters as to do homage there to the relics of Sakya-Mouni's earthly life. A truly grand and touching spectacle it is to see that poor monk, alone, in the midst of boundless deserts, with his books, his horse, and the phantoms of his imagination, sustained only by the hope of attaining to 'final deliverance,' and of 'saving men carried away by the torrent of life and death.' He often misses his way; he becomes disheartened; he even thinks of retracing his steps; suddenly he remembers the vow he took of not making one step towards the East (that is, towards China) until he had visited the land of Buddha; then he resolutely turns his horse's head towards the west. Once the skin containing his supply of water slips from his hands, and its contents are lost. 'He looks in all directions,' says his biographer, 'and only sees an endless plain, whereon is no trace of either men or horses. During the night wicked spirits cause torches as numerous as the stars to sparkle around him; in the daytime, fearful winds raise the sand, which falls on him like a torrent of rain. For four nights and five days, not a drop

of water has he wherewith to moisten his mouth and throat. A burning heat parches him. He then, believing his last hour has come, stretches himself on the sand, invoking the name of *Avalokiteçvara.** "*Bôdhisatva*," he cries, "you know that, in undertaking this journey, Hiouen-Thsang seeks not riches nor gain; neither does he wish for praise or fame. His sole aim is to find higher intellect and the right law. I respectfully believe, O *Bôdhisatva*, that your tender heart applies itself ceaselessly to free all creatures from the bitter trials of life." He prays thus, with indefatigable fervour, until the middle of the fifth night, when suddenly a delightful breeze pervades his whole being, and makes his body and limbs as supple as though he had bathed in a refreshing stream. His bedimmed eyes recover sight, and he is enabled to take a little sleep; after which he resumes his journey. He has ridden but a few miles when his horse alters its course, without his being able to turn it back. He soon beholds vast pastures, and a lake whose water is clear and transparent as a mirror. He takes a long draught, and thanks to that double godsend, both traveller and horse recover life and strength for the second time.'

He thus goes on his way, having no other guide but the heaps of human bones which line the road. The effects of mirage fill those solitudes

* *Bôdhisatva*, that is, future Buddha, for whom the Buddhists of China and Thibet profess the greatest devotion.

with armies of supernatural beings. He crosses the immense sandy desert that forms the central plateau of Asia, traverses the Dzoungaria and the kingdom of the Oïgours, leaves the high steppes of Mongolia through the defile which divides the massive ridges of the Pamir from the Altaïc range of mountains—the gateway through which the Tartar hordes have so frequently sallied to ravage the shores of the Caspian Sea and the Sarmatic plains — meets the Turks on the banks of the Taxartes, and gives us the most curious information respecting their state at that time.

The scene changes suddenly as he enters India. He finds himself in the midst of memories of his faith, readily welcomed in all the monasteries, and everywhere revered for his piety and his skill in debate. At every step he meets with relics of Sakya-Mouni. Here, the stone upon which he used to wash his garments, and which still bears threads of their texture; there, the staircase by which he came down from heaven; elsewhere, the tree under which he attained supreme intelligence; elsewhere again, the spot where he gave his eyes away as alms; in another direction, the place where, to appease the hunger of the seven cubs of a tigress, he gave away his own body. With the traveller we follow the track of this fantastic legend, consecrated by the erection of innumerable *stoûpas*, a kind of pyramidal mound, with which the most marvellous ideas are associated. The assurance with which Hiouen-Thsang

relates as phenomena visible to everybody the most incredible prodigies is really surprising. It is true he himself confesses that the spectator's faith is the indispensable condition of the miracle. There is even Buddha's foot-print, which seems of more or less size according to the greater or less faith of the beholder, and there is scarcely a relic whose description is not wound up with this invariable formula: 'The persons who worship it with sincère faith see it surrounded with luminous rays.' After reading the account of these strange hallucinations, one fully understands what a long education is needed to raise the human mind to that degree of reflection and clearness of conception in which it is no longer the sport of its own delusions. Then, also, we understand how false is the too readily accepted opinion, that if research into causes is the portion only of the learned, the verification of facts is within everybody's reach. Certainly, if it be true that public notoriety can sometimes silence criticism, this ought to apply to the marvels related by Hiouen-Thsang. Never were prodigies more palpable, or apparently less lending themselves to illusion. It seems as if it would be sufficient to open one's eyes to discover their falsehood; yet here is one of the most enlightened men of his time, a man belonging to the most sensible and the most accurate race of the world, who is a dupe like the rest; and, in our days, the Buddhists still appeal to these permanent marvels in defence of their faith. As regards

miracles, men indeed judge with the opinions of their time a great deal more than with their own eyes, and I really do not know whether we have the right to be very severe on Hiouen-Thsang. At least, seeing with what impunity ridiculous mystifications go round the whole civilized world even in our days, far from being surprised at the credulity of the past, we are compelled to admit that criticism, that faculty which guards man against the thousand illusions which surround him, is an exceptional gift, and that the day when it will regulate public opinion is still far distant.

One of the stories which best show the pilgrim's *naïveté* and good faith, is that of his visit to the cave where Sakya-Mouni's disciples believe that their master left his shadow. Nowhere is the machinery of illusion so thoroughly unveiled. 'This cave,' says the biographer, 'is situate eastward of a rivulet flowing between two mountains. When Hiouen-Thsang first peered into the cave, it appeared to him plunged in funereal darkness. "Master," said his guide to him, "go straight in; when you have touched the eastern side, go fifty steps back and look eastward; it is there that the shadow dwells." The pilgrim entered the grotto alone. Having touched the eastern wall, according to his guide's instructions, he drew back and stood still. Animated by the most profound faith, he then salaamed a hundred times, but he could not see anything. He bitterly reproached himself for his sins, he wept and cried aloud, and aban-

doned himself to grief. After that, he devoutly and with a sincere heart began reciting the Buddha's praises, taking care to prostrate himself after each verse.

'Having thus salaamed about a hundred times, he noticed on the eastern wall a gleam of light about as large as a monk's pitcher, which vanished all at once. Filled with joy, and also with grief at the disappearance of the apparition, he renewed his salaams, when the same gleam re-appeared, this time somewhat larger; it shone and vanished like lightning. In a transport of admiration and love, he then swore not to leave the spot until he had seen the Buddha's shadow. He continued to pay his homage, and when he had salaamed about two hundred times more, the whole grotto was flooded with sudden light, and the Buddha's shadow of dazzling whiteness majestically displayed itself on the wall, as when the clouds open, and the marvellous image of the golden mountain is seen. A radiant brilliance lit up his divine face. Hiouen-Thsang, plunged in ecstasy, long contemplated the sublime and incomparable object of his adoration. The Buddha's body, as well as his religious vestments, were of a reddish-yellow. The beauty of his person shone in full light; on the left, on the right, and behind him could be seen the shadows of the *bôdhisatvas* and *çramanas* forming his retinue.

'Hiouen-Thsang having clearly seen this divine phenomenon, respectfully prostrated himself, cele-

brated the Buddha's praises, and strewed flowers and perfumes. The Brahmin who accompanied him was overjoyed and astounded. "Master," said he, "had not your faith been so sincere and your vows so ardent, you would not have witnessed such a marvel." Out of his six attendants, five saw the phenomenon, but there was one who could see nothing; it only lasted a few instants.'

Among the legends which the pilgrim gleans on his road, some breathe most delicate moral feelings. I shall only quote one which appears to have enjoyed great popularity in India. In a certain monastery, there used to be a statue of Buddha which bore on its head a priceless diamond; some thieves, tempted to abstract it, surreptitiously entered the sanctuary; but, oh miracle! the statue suddenly grew to an enormous size, thus raising the diamond to a height no human arm could have reached. The robbers withdrew, muttering: 'What they say of Buddha must be a fable; of yore, it is said, he used to give away his riches and even his own body, but now he has become an awful miser!' The Buddha, smarting under the taunt, caused the statue to stoop down, and place the diamond in the hands of the thieves. But when they tried to sell it, they were arrested, and their only resource was to assert that Buddha gave them the jewel. They were then taken to the shrine, where the statue was found with its head still bent. The king then

bought back the diamond for an enormous sum, and replaced it on Buddha's head.

On every page we meet with instances of the same mildness and benevolence carried even to puerility. 'Once, the steward of a convent, being unable to procure the needful provisions, was greatly perplexed; at that moment he saw a flock of geese flying through the air, and facetiously remarked: "To-day there is no food for the monks; noble beings, you must make allowance for the circumstances." He had scarcely spoken when the leader of the flock dropped from the clouds, as though its wings had been clipped, and fell at the steward's feet. The latter, filled with fear and confusion, informed his brother monks of the occurrence, and they at once broke into tears and sobs. "That bird," they said to each other, "was a *bôdhisatva*. How could we dare to eat it? What mad wretches we are! we have been the cause of that bird's death!" They then erected a sacred tower, within which they laid the body of the goose, affixing to it an inscription, so as to hand down to posterity the remembrance of its pious devotion.'

At other times, the pure and lofty morality which, forming a contrast perhaps unique in its kind, is found amongst Buddhists closely allied with the most absurd dogmas, is revealed in edifying episodes of the pilgrim's life. 'On leaving Oude, Hiouen-Thsang embarked on the Ganges with eighty persons, bound eastward. Having

sailed a few miles, they found themselves between two banks thickly covered with *asokas* trees, whose foliage was extremely thick; on either side of the river those trees concealed ten pirate boats. The latter, by dint of hard rowing, came up the middle of the stream, surrounded the boat, and towed it ashore. There they compelled all the passengers to take off their garments, which they searched to find whatever valuables they could lay their hands on. But these brigands worshipped the goddess Dourga. Every year, in the autumn, they started in quest of a well-made and good-looking man, whom they sacrificed to that goddess in order to obtain happiness. Having examined the pilgrim, whose noble figure and distinguished appearance answered their cruel designs, they cast at each other looks of satisfaction. "Not finding any man worthy of our goddess, we were," they said, "about to let the season elapse without offering her the sacrifice she requires; but this monk is of fine stature and charming looks; let us kill him to obtain happiness."

"If this vile and contemptible body," replied Hiouen-Thsang, "could fitly meet the aim of your sacrifice, truly I should not grudge it to you; but, as I have come from distant countries in order to procure sacred books and make myself proficient in the law, and as my vow has not yet been fulfilled, I fear, generous men, that your taking my life will bring upon you the greatest misfortunes." All the passengers joined their entreaties to his:

some even offered to suffer death in his place; but the pirates obstinately refused. Their chief sent men for water from the midst of the wood of flowering *asokas*, and directed them to erect an altar made of earth kneaded with the mud from the stream; then he ordered two of his followers to draw their sabres, to place Hiouen-Thsang on the top of the altar, and to sacrifice him without delay.

'However, the pilgrim, whose face betrayed neither fear nor emotion, requested the brigands to grant him a few moments' respite, and not to hurry him off violently. "Let me," said he to them, "enter upon the *nirvâna* with a calm and joyful soul." He then thought lovingly of Maîtreya,* and begged that he might be born in the heaven of the gods, thence again to descend upon earth, in order to convert those men who were about to inflict death upon him, and to rescue them from their infamous profession, to spread abroad the benefits of the law, and bring peace and bliss to all creatures. He afterwards worshipped the Buddhas of the ten countries of the world, seated himself in the attitude of meditation, and, with all his might, concentrated his thoughts upon Maîtreya, without allowing any exterior impressions to disturb him. Then, from the depths of his enraptured soul, he fancied he was rising to Mount Mêru, and that, having traversed three heavens, he saw the venerable Maîtreya seated, in

* A much venerated *bôdhisatva*.

the celestial palace, upon a resplendent throne, and surrounded by countless gods.

'He was thus plunged in bliss, body and soul, not knowing that he was beside the altar, heedless of the bloodthirsty pirates, when all at once a furious wind began to blow, breaking the branches of the trees, whirling the sand about in all directions, swelling the stream and capsizing the boats. The pirates were terrified. One of them having accidentally touched Hiouen-Thsang's hand, the pilgrim opened his eyes and said: "Has my hour come?" "Master," replied the brigands, "we dare not injure you; on the contrary, we wish to express to you our profound respect." Having accepted their apology, Hiouen-Thsang taught them that those who practise murder, theft, and impious sacrifices shall, in the future life, endure everlasting torments. "We were," said the pirates, "blind and mad, and we have committed hateful crimes. From this day, we swear to renounce our infamous calling, and wish the master to bear witness to our conversion." Saying this, they exhorted each other to do good, gathered together the instruments of murder and cast them into the stream; they then returned to each passenger his wearing apparel and his provisions; after which they respectfully received the five prohibitions.'

The account of Hiouen-Thsang's death is no less touching. Informed by a secret warning of his approaching end, he directs a list to be drawn

up of the books he had translated, the thousands of copies of the law which had been made under his supervision, of the myriads of images of Buddha he had caused to be painted on silk, of the persons towards whom he had shown compassion, of the creatures he had redeemed, of the hundred thousand lamps he had lighted. After which, he divides his property amongst the destitute, and gives them a great banquet. He then invites his disciples to take a joyous leave of Hiouen-Thsang's impure body, which, having played its part, no longer deserves to live. 'I wish,' he added, 'to see the merits I may have acquired by my good deeds imparted to other men, born again with them in the heaven of the gods, and with them attaining transcendental intelligence.' He then became silent and entered upon meditation. He died successively to the world of sight, to the world of thought, to the world of perception of immaterial things. 'Master,' inquired one of his disciples, 'have you at last obtained the privilege of again coming to life in Maîtreya's assembly?' 'Yes,' said he, with a faint voice. His breathing then grew gradually weaker, and his soul took flight. His face still preserved its colour; all his features were expressive of joy; his body emitted no odour.

It will easily be conceived that, in the history of the human mind, nothing can be of greater interest than to have thus, at a given date and as in a mirror, the expression of the inmost

feelings of a Buddhist. Buddhism in Hiouen-Thsang has already existed more than a thousand years; and it has also undergone the most thorough transformation. It is no longer that nihilist and atheistic philosophy which we find expounded with incredible audacity in the books most nearly cotemporary with Sakya's preaching. Buddhism has lost that vigour of negation, that frightful daring which, at certain moments of madness, led it to deny its own existence and that of everything else. It is now but a pure and lofty morality, a devotion, a collection of pious legends, a more or less idolatrous worship. The numerous controversies which fill Hiouen-Thsang's pilgrimage relate mostly to questions of texts: there are constant references to the *great* and the *small vehicle*, that is, the two kinds of sacred books or *soutras* possessed by the Buddhists; the latter shorter, more simple and more in keeping with Sakya's primitive teachings; the former more developed, more mythological, and of a richer imagination. With Buddhism, as with every other creed, these disputes seem to have been greatly prejudicial to charity. They, at least, suppose in the adversaries peculiar assurance and full conviction of the truth of their principles, since, before each controversy, we see the aggressor affixing to the door of the convent the theses he proposes to sustain, with the invariable formula: 'If anyone finds in this writing one single erroneous word, and shows himself capable of refuting it, I

will give him my head to cut off, in order to prove my gratitude.' As a faithful Buddhist, Hiouen-Thsang never availed himself of the advantages victory procured him; he contented himself with taking the defeated heretic into his service for a few days, in order that he might learn about the doctrines he was not acquainted with, so as to prepare their refutation.

To sum up, Hiouen-Thsang remains to the last a most winning personage. Everywhere we see the Chinese beneath the Buddhist, and that combination produces a loftier character than is usually that of the Chinese—more human in its proportions and more tangible than that of Indian ascetics. Filial piety, China's paramount virtue, is also that of our Buddhist. On his return, his first care is to obtain leave from the Emperor to go with his aged sister and remove the remains of his parents, hurriedly buried at a period of political trouble. With his own hands he pulls up the plants that cover their grave, and places their bodies in a double coffin. The love of his country never deserts him in the course of his long voyages. He defends the honour and the institutions of China against Brahminical pretensions; in the presence of the barbarians, his meekness, his politeness, that delicate feeling of pride and compassion which refined and superior minds experience when in contact with mere brutish fellow-creatures, bring about curious contrasts, which exhibit in a strong light the distinc-

tion of his mind and manners. To the great sentiment of civilization (a word and a sentiment which in the Asiatic world only apply to China), he unites that which only belongs to Buddhism—horror of bloodshed, delicate sensibility, lofty spirituality.

The consideration he enjoys and the important rank he occupies in his own country are also noteworthy facts. The Emperor himself displays as much interest in his translations as if they were State matters; and when Hiouen-Thsang begs him 'to deign to lower his divine pencil and write in praise of Buddha a preface whose sublime ideas shall shine like the sun and the moon, whose characters, precious as silver and jade, shall last as long as heaven and earth, and shall become an object of inexhaustible admiration for future generations,' the Emperor out of modesty long declines to assent to the request. He eventually writes the preface so much desired, containing seven hundred and eighty-one characters, and written in a style enriched with all the ornaments of Chinese rhetoric; he nevertheless thinks fit to apologize 'for having defiled the traveller's golden pages, by strewing gravel and broken tiles in the forest of pearls.'

Such is, in China, the style of Emperors. It does not seem exaggerated when we bear in mind the rank held, or at least which used to be held, in Chinese society, before its decadence, by intellectual pursuits and the men who follow them. China is perhaps the only country where the

rights of intellect have been the object of official sanction, and where ascertained merit has been admitted to confer a right to govern the State. Here, again, we find her the antipodes of India, at the same time walking hand in hand with her. For India is also the only country where the monopoly of intellectual and religious studies formed an aristocracy, recruited by birth, and claiming as a right the first rank in society. Between that aristocracy of contemplation which is Brahminism, and the supremacy of an *academy of moral and political science*, which is the Chinese system, in one sense there is only a step, and in another sense the distance is immeasurable. The gentle manners and the humanity characterising the Chinese race found another motive for sympathy in the spirit of amenity and benevolence which is the cause of the success of Buddhism among the most diverse races. In short, India and China, violently rushing into opposite extremes of human thought, have met in that species of atheism and nihilism which is the foundation of Sakya's doctrine: India, through the exaggeration of that perception of infinity which absorbs all existence, all conscience, all individuality; China, through a too exclusive conception of finiteness, and an absolute absence of intranscendental faculties. These concurrences between widely opposed geniuses throw open to the thinker singular perspectives of human nature, its capabilities and its various combinations—they appear

like the intersections by means of which geometers determine positions and trace the plan of a country.

The habits of the European mind, or, if it is preferred, of the French mind, are with us so deeply rooted, that such strange studies will long appear fit only to be classed with objects of frivolous curiosity. Though Buddhism may be the religion of two hundred millions of our fellow-creatures, many people will nevertheless say: 'How can a man be a Buddhist?' and Jacquemont's* impertinences will always, in the eyes of such people, appear more rational than the patient investigations of criticism. But earnest men will persist in thinking that a doctrine which for the last twenty-five centuries has brought solace and comfort to a considerable portion of mankind, must deserve their notice. Buddhism is, indeed, at the present time, the religion which rules over the largest number of consciences, and if ever (which God forbid!) mankind were to submit religion to universal suffrage, the grand Lama would obtain at least a relative majority.† It

* Victor Jacquemont, born at Paris in 1801, died at Bombay in 1832. A French naturalist who travelled officially many years in India, eminent as a scientist, but whose appreciation of Buddhism seems rather arbitrary.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

† According to M. Garcin de Cassy, Buddhism reckons a hundred millions more adherents than Catholicism.—*Journal des Débats*, July 7, 1854, second page, third column, first paragraph.

cannot be uninteresting to learn how the inhabitants of one half of Asia understand life and the ideal. We are at liberty, no doubt, to think that absurd which in their eyes is sublime, provided we agree to admit that we appear to them as foolish as they do to us, and that their superiority is as obvious to them as ours is to us.

*NEW WORKS ON BUDDHISM.**

THE study of Buddhism seems to have especially devolved upon French science. Abel Remusat, Eugène Burnouf, Stanislas Julien, gave us the first-fruits of it. Now that those studies have attained a high stage of progress, they come back to us; and though the last word can never be uttered in such difficult matters, we may be permitted to rank M. Senart's works among those which sum up a scientific position and evidence maturity. Those works do the greatest honour

* E. Senart's 'Essai sur la Légende de Buddha, son Caractère et ses Origines,' 2nd edition, revised and followed by an index, xxxv-496 pages. Paris, 1882, Leroux, 8vo. E. Senart's 'The Mahâvastu,' Sanscrit text, published for the first time; to which are added an introduction and commentary, vol. i., lxii-635 pages, 8vo (in the 'Collection d'Ouvrages orientaux,' published by the Société Asiatique, 2nd series). Paris, 1882, National Printing Office (Leroux). E. Senart's 'Les Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' vol. i., the fourteen edicts. Paris, 326 pages, 2 plates. Reprinted from the *Journal Asiatique*, 1880 and 1881 (Leroux). See also *Journal Asiatique*, April, May, June, August, and September, 1881; February-March, 1883. A. Bergaigne and A. Barth, 'Les Inscriptions sanscrites du Cambodge,' in the *Journal Asiatique*, February-March and August-September, 1882.

to our young Oriental school. By their solidity and their conscientious minuteness they call to mind those of Burnouf; and if that illustrious master had survived to our day, as the duration of human life would easily have allowed, he, no doubt, would have been the first to praise them. It is true that, on some points, the conclusions of the two scholars seem to contradict each other. Thirty years of active researches must have borne some fruit; and during that period general criticism may also have made some progress. Burnouf had too scientific a mind to believe that nothing more was to be done after him; and M. Senart himself is aware that the intricate problems of history only approach solution by successive approximations. He has repeatedly modified his opinions, and by successive touches given to them the highest possible degree of precision.

I.

The life of Buddha is the most striking of all the Buddhistic legends; it is, also, that which was known first. 'He practised abstinence,' says Marco Polo,* 'just as though he had been a Christian. Had he been one, he would, by reason of the pure and virtuous life he led, have been numbered among the saints of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Christian Church has long been of the same opinion. The *Lalitavistāra* appeared

* Marco Polo's 'Relation,' chap. clxxviii

so beautiful to the Christians of the East, that from it they derived the materials for the lives of the saints Barlaam and Josaphat,* which for centuries have been read in the Church with edification. When the Buddhist Gospel was for the first time translated into French by M. Foucaux, all people of taste read it with the greatest pleasure, and thought they were reading a fabulous legend rather than a myth without any foundation of fact.

An important distinction was soon made, which appeared a solid standpoint for criticism. In the developed *Soutras*, as in the *Lalitavistāra*, the details of facts are devoid of historical value. This is too obvious to need demonstration. But the simple *Soutras* look much more historical. In them we may fancy we touch a real Sakya, we hear the echo of his preaching, we feel the recoil of the sympathies and antipathies which he inspired. A character human, historical, seemed to live below these exuberant amplifications; and though the general outline be that of the ideal Hindu, some of the traits appeared to preserve the stamp of individuality.

That is why people were slow to inquire whether this legend, so brightly coloured, contained a kernel of fact, or whether, like a soap-bubble, it possessed no solidity. Eugène Burnouf fully ad-

Josaphat is a corruption of Joasaf, a form in use among Eastern Christians, which itself is but a corruption of بوذاسف = *Boudasf* = *Bôdhisatva*, due to the errors produced in Arabic by the omission of the diacritical dots.

mitted the personality and historical importance of Buddha. 'I do not,' he wrote, 'hesitate to say that Sakya-Mouni never intended to substitute new objects and new forms of worship for those of the existing popular creed. He lived, he taught, and he died as a philosopher, and his humanity has remained a fact so incontestably acknowledged by all, that the legend-makers, whom it cost so little to invent miracles, never even thought of making a god of him after his death.' It is certain that, placed in the midst of a Hindu pantheon, Buddha's statue is easily distinguished. Unlike the hieratic idols, it is not laden with attributes contrary to nature; it is the image of a man seated, with crossed legs, in the attitude of meditation. That absolute quietude, that naked simplicity, does not in anywise put us in mind of the demiurgus, the creating and destroying god. Even the abundant details given of his physical appearance, though mostly conceived according to the standard of Hindu beauty, contain particulars not easy to explain on the hypothesis of a pure *à priori* creation.*

Such is the problem to which M. Senart applies his firm and sagacious criticism. M. Senart's first essays on the legend of Buddha appeared in the *Journal Asiatique* from August, 1873, to September, 1875. They at once enlisted the attention of cultured readers. Before M. Senart, M. Vassiliew

* See Burnouf's 'Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' p. 553 and following.

had reduced almost to nothing the historical part played by Buddha; but the true reasons for doubt were not assigned. M. Senart was the first to point out that the narrative hitherto called the life of Buddha is less a legendary biography than a purely mythological construction, formed of pre-existing elements, mostly of naturalistic origin. Placing more accurately than others had done before him the Buddhistic legend in its Hindu surroundings, M. Senart endeavoured to prove that this legend is but the development of the cycle of ideas which Brahminism grouped round Vishnu Nârâyâna.* A skilful comparison with Krishnaism served to explain in what light these mythological evolutions of a primitive naturalism are to be understood. Instead of seeing in the life of Buddha the product of divers influences foreign to India, M. Senart scarcely considers it an invention at all. To him Buddhism is simply the expansion of popular Brahminism. He bases his arguments chiefly upon two of the records which were types of Buddha's legend: the *Tchakravartin*,† and the *Mahapuruscha*. M. Senart thinks those words have had ascribed to them too literal and

* The waters are called *Nárá*, or 'the spirit' of Goḍ (Vishnu); and since they were his first *Ayána*, or place of motion, he thence is named 'Náráyána,' 'moving on the waters.'—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

† He who sets the wheel (*chakra*, Vishnu's discus) in motion; it also means, according to Wilson, he who abides (*vartatte*) or rules over an extensive territory called a Chakra (*Chakra-verrti*).—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

historic an interpretation. He seeks for their meaning in Brahminism, and further back in naturalism. This leads him to conclude that *Buddha* was a technical expression rather than a personality—a dogma rather than an historical reality. Unlike M. Vassiliew and M. Kern,* he does not deny the existence of a real personage who may have served as a support for the legend, if not as its substratum; but he regards all attempts at discriminating the myth from the reality as doomed to failure. According to M. Senart, the legend of Buddha is no greater proof of Sakya-Mouni's existence than the *Mahabrarata* and the *Pûranas* are of Krishna's.

In the revised and enlarged edition of the essays previously published in the *Journal Asiatique*, M. Senart has not sensibly modified any of his views; he simply explains and develops them. M. Senart acknowledges that all sects have had a founder, Buddhism like the rest; but he thinks too much historical consistency has been ascribed to Sakya-Mouni. His impression is that, by arbitrary alterations, a tissue of fables conceived *à priori* has complacently been transformed into a kind of history, more or less truthful in appearance. Applied to a personage who, at a more or less definite period, in a more or less ascertained spot, may have had an historical existence, these legends seem to have absorbed a limited number of recollections

* See *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Sept.-Oct., 1881; Jan.-Feb., March-April, 1882.

founded on facts. 'The distinction is,' says M. Senart,* 'indeed, rather difficult to establish. . . . All that looks suspicious must not necessarily be rejected. Yet it does not follow that all which, strictly speaking, seems admissible should be retained. There is no so-called god — neither Vishnu, nor Krishna, nor Hercules—of whom a sufficiently reasonable biography might not be constructed by a process similar to that which has hitherto been applied to the legend of Buddha.'

The point where M. Senart completely triumphs, is when he develops the idea that the legend of Buddha is not at all the peculiar property of Buddhism; that it is an adaptation—a new version of traditions long popular and previously unified in the cycle of Vishnu. A human master was substituted for the divine master of Vishnuism. 'The human doctor, Sakya-Mouni, or whatever his real name may have been, inherited the legendary cloak that fell from the shoulders of the dispossessed god. Anxiety and discouragement, so natural to the Hindus, recovered in human guise the consolations and the hopes of divine visits. All the school could succeed in doing towards preserving the integrity of the theory was to suppress divine perpetuity, to mask celestial origins, to humanize, by the method of Euemerus, applied no doubt unconsciously, the whole theory and myth.'†

As early as 1874 the author of the present

* 'Essai sur la Légende de Buddha,' p. 142.

† *Ibid.*, p. 455.

article, being called upon, as secretary of the Société Asiatique, to report on M. Senart's work,* thought fit to make some reserve in that respect. 'India,' he said, 'having remained mythological much longer and to a much greater degree than any other country, requires special precautions. Elsewhere ideal and real biographies may very well co-exist. Yes, assuredly the life of Buddha was, as it were, written beforehand. The statue of the hermit who lived in the sixth century before Christ was cast in a mould which fixed his most insignificant features before his birth. The proof of this is that vast literature of the Djatakas, which shows us the Buddha, living thousands of times, under divers names and circumstances, the same life he is to live when born on earth. But the book of the "Conformités" also shows us the life of Francis of Assisi as realizing a previous ideal, which is no other than the life of Christ. Yet Francis of Assisi is quite a real personage, whose period and life are well known to us. Was not the life of Christ itself written in the so-called Messianic prophecies? Like the *Tchakravartin*, like the *Mahapuruscha*, like the *Buddha*, the Jewish Messiah was also, in some sort, depicted *à priori*. Certain parts of his biography could not be other than they were; and the influence of the legend would of itself have been sufficiently powerful to force the reality, whatever it were, into conformity

* *Journal Asiatique*, July, 1874, pp. 20, 21; July, 1875, pp. 18, 19; July, 1876, pp. 31, 32.

with the ideal delineated in the texts. But for all that the Messianic ideal was represented in time and space by a real person. Let us proclaim this truth: in criticism there are no two cases alike; what is true respecting one epoch, country, or race, may not with equal accuracy apply to another race, country, or epoch. And yet I can hardly believe that, even in India, the legend does not imply some historical truth. The general colouring, or at least the general sentiment, may often, despite the falsity of all details, imply some higher truth, truer than material truth, in which the chances of incidents often hold a prominent place.'

In an excellent criticism recently devoted to the latest works on the religions of India,* M. Barth, one of the most learned of our contemporaries in the whole range of Indian studies, makes similar observations. M. Barth admits that the Buddha's biography is so penetrated by solar myths that we must resign ourselves to knowing little that is positive about it. The historical kernel preserved by M. Barth is, however, more considerable than that retained by M. Senart: in support of the myths, the former admits a real person very attractive in the eyes of the people: 'Even if the life of Krishna were despoiled of half its wonders, and that of Buddha loaded still more with the supernatural, the former would still be the life of a god, and the latter of a man.'

* *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, February 16, 1882, p. 23 and following of the reprint.

Those reserves seem just and necessary. Does not the very name of Sakya point to some real historical personage? Is not the much more humane and moral character displayed by Buddhism, when compared with the other creeds of India, a sufficient reason for believing its origin to have been different from the origins of Vishnuism or Krishnaism? Let us take Christianity in the fourth century, in the time of Julian. Let us suppose that all the Christian works of the first, second, and third centuries had been destroyed. In comparing the Christianity and the Paganism of that period, at Antioch, for instance, a sagacious mind might well say: 'Apollo, Jupiter, Venus have never been real living personages; but, at the origin of Christianity, there is an historical fact connected with a real founder.' In like manner the legends of Krishna and Vishnu on the one side, and that of Sakya-Mouni on the other, present striking differences. The latter bears a stamp of reality of which the others are totally devoid. In the first case, we feel we have before us a god possessing no earthly reality; in the second, a man totally transfigured by legends.

It is true that, between the life of a humanized god and that of a deified man, the distinction may often be difficult to detect. In such questions, as M. Senart well remarks, if too rigid, one runs the risk of losing many truths; if too easy, one may fall into many snares. Experience, which in physical and natural sciences is the proof of hypo-

thesis, cannot apply to such matters. There is no final appeal between those who have denied and those who have affirmed too much; for the phenomena whose character is to be appreciated disappeared centuries ago, and the possibility of reproducing them is lost for ever.

Perhaps it is necessary to make similar reserves respecting M. Senart's views on the originality of Buddhism. The word 'originality' may be taken in various acceptations. Christianity at its birth is composed wholly of Jewish ideas already in existence; and yet Christianity at its birth is a fact of undoubted originality. The duty of criticism is at the same time to disentangle the errors inherent in popular accounts, and to preserve the part played by individuals, without which we cannot explain the past. Criticism is an anatomy which must not destroy the life of the subject it studies. At least it is well to give legends their legitimate place by the side of analytical researches. Legends have a foundation of their own, and to sacrifice them is to sacrifice one half of history.

II.

M. Senart so thoroughly understood this that he resolved himself to publish one of those texts whose deficiency in historical value he has exposed better than anyone else. Such a task is an ungrateful one, and, as a rule, but indifferently rewarded. We can hardly hope for new results

from the publication of the Nepâlese Sutras. Though, since Burnouf's time, our views concerning the real biography of Sakya-Mouni have been modified, yet the essential lines of Buddhistic philosophy, as defined by that great master, have required scarcely any alteration. The texts read by Burnouf were the most important, and he understood them perfectly. The impression at first produced by those texts was sometimes erroneous, because by the side of the philosophical books of a religion there is the popular interpretation, which may be quite different from the speculations of doctors. Anyone acquainted with Christianity only through St. Augustin's works would be greatly deluded if he imagined that they could teach him the religion of Spanish or Calabrian peasants. That which is written is not the whole of a religion, though 'what is writ is writ.' The Buddhistic texts, whether Nepâlese or Singâlese, remain important documents; and M. Senart was quite justified in thinking that, to complete the programme of solid studies he drew out for himself, he must undertake the publication of some of those great writings which by their prolixity had disheartened all scientific zeal less ardent than Burnouf's.

Four or five Nepâlese Sutras, the 'Lalitavistâra,' the 'Lotus of the Good Law,' the 'Vajrachedika,' the 'Sukhavativyuha Sutra,' the 'Meghasutra,'*

* M. Senart points out to me Râjendralal Mitra's work, 'The Sanscrit Buddhist Literature of Nepâl,' Calcutta, 1882,

have been placed within the reach of European readers. Desirous of widening this too narrow circle, M. Senart selected the 'Mahavastou,' the choice of which he justified by very good reasons. Of all unpublished Buddhistic Nepâlese texts, the 'Mahavastou' is certainly the most important one to be well acquainted with. Burnouf pointed it out several times, and would, no doubt, have undertaken it had not premature death snatched him from science. It is the chief manual of Buddha's life, analogous to the 'Lalitavistâra,' for one of the sects or schools into which Buddhism is divided; it is the only specimen we possess of the section Vinaya. Besides, as regards the language, it is a treatise of paramount interest. The language of the 'Mahavastou' is the Gathâs dialect, which had only been met with before in the metrical texts. Here it is employed in prose as well as in verse. These are the reasons which a few years ago determined the Société Asiatique to include the 'Mahavastou' in its published collection of Oriental works ('Collection d'Ouvrages orientaux'). The text is printed by M. Senart with the most minute care, and all the variations are indicated. The translation of such a prolix work in its entirety would have been impossible. M. Senart's introduction contains an extensive analysis, which almost does duty for a translation.

as an excellent compendium of Nepâlese Buddhistic literature.

Lastly, a vast commentary gives an account of all the grammatical difficulties. Here we see how skilful as a philologist is M. Senart. Having to deal with a text containing two idioms, or rather two different periods of the same idiom, he points out with rare sagacity the passage from the learned to the popular language, and also the return from the popular language to the learned one, in consequence of the pedantry of the transcribers. When completed, M. Senart's work will be in three volumes. Nothing does more honour to our century than the minute attention given to texts trivial in themselves, but important to the history of mankind. In philology no detail is useless. An indifferent text often teaches as much as a masterpiece. A peculiarity, which at first sight seems insignificant, may later on become a fundamental element in the solution of important problems.

III.

While applying the highest and most acute criticism to the texts of the manuscripts, M. Senart also availed himself of the invaluable aid of epigraphy. Taking up, with the help of Cunningham's 'Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,' the work in which Princep, Burnouf, Kern, Bühler had already made a great advance, he has progressed most satisfactorily with the interpretation of Asoka-Piyadasi's edicts. The character of that sovereign, the founder of the most extensive power

existing in India previous to the Christian era, the second successor of that Sandracottus whose date is the first fixed point in the uncertain chronology of India, will soon be known in all its details. Thanks to the frequent repetition of the same texts, M. Senart has been able to complete the inscriptions one by the other, and to arrive at a certainty seldom afforded by an isolated epigraphic text.

The epigraphy of all nations does not present anything more singular than these long pious edicts which the Buddhist Constantine scattered over the country in order to instruct and edify the people.* They show the ideal of a State religion, organized in its most insignificant details, employing a numerous staff of functionaries, imposed upon the people for their happiness, and multiplying the means of teaching. The precepts given to the people are based on a respect for life which even prohibits the killing of animals. The king, who often confesses his faults, acknowledges that, formerly, some misdeeds were perpetrated in his kitchen. 'But at the time of this edict being engraved,' he adds, 'three animals only are slaughtered for my table—two peacocks and a gazelle; and the last not as a rule. In future, even these three animals will no longer be destroyed.'† The king applies his authority,

See the legendary accounts in Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' pp. 370, 371.

† 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' p. 62.

which is absolute, to multiply useful trees and medicinal herbs everywhere ;* to plant the roads with mango-trees, which shelter both men and animals from the scorching heat of the sun ; to have pools and wells dug at frequent intervals ; to establish caravansaries for travellers.† The aim of Government is the well-being, the universal happiness, of men and beasts.‡ All good is summed up in religion. 'Thus says King Piyadasi, beloved of the *devas:* "Religion is an excellent thing. But what is religion? Religion is the least possible evil, much good, piety, charity, veracity, and also purity of life . . . ."'§ The organization of religion is thus the chief duty of government. For that purpose, the king appoints inspectors, distinct from the clergy and the religious orders, whose work is of a higher importance than religious creeds and practices : namely, to promote humanity, good behaviour, and reverence.‖

'Thus says King Piyadasi, beloved of the *devas:*¶ "In the twenty-seventh year after my coronation I caused this edict to be engraved.

* 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' p. 74.

† *Ibid.*, p. 74 ; *Journal Asiatique*, April-June, 1882, p. 410 ; August-September, 1882, p. 132.

‡ *Journal Asiatique*, April-June, 1882, p. 410.

§ *Ibid.*, April-June, 1882, pp. 409, 410 ; August-September, 1882, p. 133. Compare 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' pp. 239, 240.

‖ 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' pp. 91, 92, 113, 114, 143, 144, 173 ; *Journal Asiatique*, April-June, 1882, pp. 113, 131-133 ; August-September, 1882, pp. 404, 435, 436.

¶ *Journal Asiatique*, April-June, 1882, p. 404.

Happiness in this world and in the next is hard to attain, unless [my officers will display] extreme zeal for religion, strict supervision, extreme obedience, a most lively sense of responsibility, and extreme activity. But, thanks to my instructions, that care, that zeal for religion are growing and will grow [with them] from day to day. And my officers—superior, subaltern, and of middle rank—conform themselves, and lead [the people] in the right path, so as to keep their consciences unburdened. In the same way the inspectors of the border-countries proceed. For this is the rule: government by religion, law by religion, progress by religion, security by religion." '

'Religious progress* among men is obtained in two ways: by positive rules, and by the sentiments with which we inspire them. But, of these two, positive rules have little value; inspiration alone gives rules their power. For instance, I make a positive rule when I forbid the killing of this or that animal, and in many other religious edicts which I have issued. But it is only in the modification of personal sentiments that we clearly trace the progress of religion; in the [general] respect for life, in the care we take not to sacrifice any being. It is with that object I have had this inscription made, that it may last for my sons and grandsons, that it may last as long as the sun and the moon, that my posterity may follow my teachings; for, in pursuing this

Journal Asiatique, August-September, 1882, pp. 133, 134.

path, we shall secure happiness here and in the next world.'

Some of these passages, written in the time of the successors of Alexander, are like maxims of Marcus Aurelius engraved on stone 420 years beforehand. 'Thus says King Piyadasi, beloved of the *devas*:* "Men only see their good deeds; they say to themselves: 'I accomplished such and such good deeds.' But men do not see the evil they are guilty of; they do not say: 'I committed such and such bad deeds. . . .' It is true that this self-examination is painful; yet it is necessary that we should watch over ourselves, and say: 'Such and such feelings are sinful—violence of temper, cruelty, wrath, pride.' We must keep strict watch over ourselves, and say: 'I will not give way to envy, I will not calumniate; that will be for my greatest good in the present life; that will indeed be for my greatest good in the future life.' " '

The following law, relating to criminals sentenced to death, was dictated by a lofty idealism: 'From this day,† [I introduce] the [following] rule: to prisoners tried and sentenced to death I grant a respite of three days [previous to their execution].‡ They will be told the exact time they have to live, so that being forewarned of the end of their life they may distribute alms and

* *Journal Asiatique*, April-June, 1882, p. 417.

† *Ibid.*, April-June, 1882, p. 436.

‡ *Sic* in orig.

practise fasting. I wish that, though imprisoned, they may secure their hereafter. I wish them to observe the divers practices of religion, control over the senses, and almsgiving.'

What we should least expect to find in such enactments, is freedom of worship. It is, however, unequivocally proclaimed. This is the seventh edict: 'King Piyadasi, beloved of the *devas*, wishes all sects to dwell, unmolested, in all places, it being, indeed, the object of such sects to subdue the senses, and to attain purity of soul; but the soul is fickle in its resolutions—changeful in its pursuits. They will, therefore, practise [their rules] wholly or in part.'*

The sects meant by Piyadasi were religious orders rather than religions different from each other. Piyadasi saw clearly that, in religious matters, we often find the same principles concealed under widely different aspects: 'King Piyadasi, beloved of the *devas*, honours all sects;† ascetics and heads of families he honours by alms and all sorts of honours. But the [king], beloved of the *devas*, attaches less importance to those alms and honours than to the desire he has to see the reign of [the moral virtues which constitute] their essential part. Such a reign would involve, it is true, many differences. Yet, for all, it has a common basis, which is moderation of language

* 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' pp. 181-192 (see also p. 143); *Journal Asiatique*, August-September, 1882, p. 132.

† 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' pp. 263-265.

—that is, we must not extol our own sect and decry others; we must not underrate others without legitimate cause; we must rather, on every occasion, render to other sects the honours they merit. By acting thus, we shall further the progress of our own sect, and at the same time serve the others. He who extols his own sect, and runs down others, does so, no doubt, with the intention of making his own prominent; but by acting thus, he only deals a most severe blow to his own sect. For this reason, concord alone is good in the sense that all shall listen willingly to each others' opinions. It is, indeed, the wish of the [king], beloved of the *devas*, that all sects may become learned, that they may profess pure doctrines. All, of whatever faith, must say to themselves that the king, beloved of the *devàs*, attaches less importance to almsgiving and to outward observances than to the wish he has to see the reign of essential truths and respect shown to all sects. It is to this end that the inspectors of religion, the officers appointed to watch over women, the superintendents, and other classes of functionaries, direct their efforts. The result is the advancement of my own belief, and the progress of religion.'

'Men,' again says the royal moralist, 'observe various customs in illness, on the marriage of a son or daughter, on the birth of a child, when starting on a journey. But those practices, observed by the majority, are vain and worthless.

Their observance is necessary; yet they bear no fruit. The practice of religion, on the contrary, produces striking results; such as consideration for slaves and servants, respect for parents and masters, gentleness to all living creatures, charity to Sramânas and Brahmins. Such things as these I call the practice of religion.'*

The thirteenth edict is extremely puzzling. It is that in whose interpretation M. Senart has made most progress compared with his predecessors. 'Immense is the Kalinga,† conquered by King Piyadasi, the *devas*' beloved. Hundreds of thousands of creatures were carried away from there; a hundred thousand were wounded there; many times that number died there. Then the king, the beloved of the *devas*, applied himself to religion; he conceived zeal, he strove to diffuse it; so greatly did the *devas*' beloved king regret [what took place] in the conquest of the Kalinga. . . . In fact, the *devas*' beloved king desires safety for all creatures, respect for life, peace and kindness. These are what the *devas*' beloved king considers as the conquests of religion. It is in those religious conquests that the *devas*' beloved king finds pleasure, either within his dominions or along all his frontiers, throughout an extent of many hundreds of *yojanas*.‡ Among his [neighbours are]

* 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' pp. 227-228. Compare p. 249.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 308-311.

‡ A topographical measure equal to about seven English miles.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

Antiochus, King of the Yavanas, and north of that Antiochus, four kings: Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas, Alexander. In the south the Codas, the Pamdyas, as far as to Tamdapanni; and also the King of the Huns (?), Vismavasi (?). Among the Greeks and the Kambojas, the Nabhakas and the Nabhapamptis, the Bhojas and the Petenikas, the Andhras and the Pulindas, everywhere they conform to the religious instructions of the *devas'* beloved king. Wherever the envoys of the *devas'* beloved king were sent, the people having, on behalf of the *devas'* beloved king, been told the duties of religion, conform, and always will conform to religious instructions, to religion, that barrier against . . . . It is thus that all places have been conquered, and I have felt an inward joy; such is the contentment afforded by the conquests of religion. But, to tell the truth, contentment is a secondary consideration, and the *devas'* beloved king attaches value only to the rewards of a future state. This is why this religious inscription has been engraved, that our sons and grandsons may not believe they are to make fresh conquests. They must not think that conquests by means of arrows deserve the name of conquests; they are but disturbances and violence. The conquests of religion alone are real conquests: they hold good for this world and the next. Let my sons delight only in the pleasures of religion; for these alone are of value both in this world and in the next.'

Piyadasi delights to dwell upon his conversion, which, it appears, was the result of a strong moral impression.* 'In the past, kings used to join in parties of pleasure. Hunting and similar pursuits used to be their delight. In the thirteenth year of my coronation, I, King Piyadasi, beloved of the *devas*, have gained wisdom. My goings forth are only for religious duties, viz.: alms-giving to Brahmins and Sramânas, visiting the aged, distributing money, visiting the people of the empire, teaching religion, taking counsel on religious matters. It is thus that from the time of his conversion King Piyadasi, the beloved of the *devas*, has enjoyed, in exchange for worldly joys, the satisfaction arising from good actions.'† And elsewhere: 'All men are my children; as I wish for my children all prosperity and bliss in this world and in the next, so do I wish for all men.'‡

IV.

Texts such as these, whose originals we may almost be said to possess, and which cast such a bright light upon the state of India in the middle of the third century before Christ, are of paramount interest. It is remarkable that, in the fourteen edicts, properly so called, Sakya-Mouni's name is

* See the legendary account in Eugène Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 358 and following.

† 'Inscriptions de Piyadasi,' pp. 196, 197.

‡ *Journal Asiatique*, February-March, 1883, pp. 211, 229.

not mentioned once, nor does Buddhism appear as a distinct religion.* The king speaks in the name of religion itself, not in favour of some special creed, opposed to other existing forms of worship. In the inscriptions of Bhabhra and Sahasaram or Rupnath, on the contrary, which are also Piyadasi's,† Buddhism is expressly professed. This silence need not astonish us. It is exactly the attitude assumed, in the second century after Christ, by Christian apologists, who scarcely ever name Jesus, and never separate Him from the tradition of the previous prophets. In like manner the unity of Hindu religion is, for Piyadasi, a fact everywhere understood. An important passage in the inscription of Sahasaram or Rupnath would seem to signify, according to M. Bühler's interpretation: 'The gods who, in the Jamboudvipa, were regarded as true gods, I caused to be recognised as men and false gods.' But such a thought is so little Buddhistic that M. Senart thinks it must not be accepted; he is of opinion that the passage is susceptible of quite a different meaning.

Indeed, we must no longer think of Buddhism as a religion distinct from Brahminism, having had in India a beginning and an end marked by characteristic events. Buddhism marks a period

* Note, however, the word 'Sambodhi' in the eighth of the fourteen edicts, pp. 183-197.

† See, on this point, *Journal Asiatique*, August-September, 1882, p. 103 and following.

in Hindu religion—it is a form under which that religion was marvellously successful in proselytism in regions foreign to India; but that is not the exclusive privilege of Buddhism. Hinduism, under all its forms, has exercised a most profound influence upon Eastern Asia. Long ago its monuments were discovered in Java and Bali. In our time, Cambodia has revealed to us still more important proofs of its influence.

What, indeed, are those curious monuments of Angkor, and others of the same kind, about which such rash hypotheses have been formed? They are monuments of Hindu religion, devoid of any special distinction. Are they Buddhistic or Brahminic? They are both at the same time. There would not have been so much uncertainty on this point had we sooner applied ourselves to deciphering the inscriptions on those monuments. Thanks to the splendid researches of MM. Bergaigne, Barth, and Senart, the problem is now solved. These extraordinary structures, which were at first supposed to be the remains of primitive art, are now ascribed with certainty to the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries of our era. In them Sivaism and Buddhism are blended; and Sivaism appears here even before Buddhism.

The mission entrusted to M. Aymonier in Indo-China, and which he fulfils with such laudable activity, will much increase the number of these inscriptions, and fill up many gaps in the history of India. Thus we see Sanscrit in its turn

entering the path of epigraphy, like Greek and Latin, and the ancient Semitic dialects. When, from manuscripts (and, as regards India, we know that hers do not go back very far), philology has derived a knowledge of the language and the chief texts, it longs to meet with specimens of the old writing, to lay hold, so to speak, of the very autographs of the past. As a rule, philology is revived by this prolific contact, and criticism acquires a certainty which the intervention of copyists always weakens—the accuracy of a text being in inverse ratio to the number of copyists intervening between us and the original.

The relation between Buddhism and Brahminism has sometimes been compared with the relation between Christianity and Judaism. The opposition between the two Hindu creeds has been, in reality, much less marked than that of the two religions that sprang from Israel. Buddhism might be compared to Franciscanism (if the word may be allowed), as it existed in the thought of the zealous Franciscan friars, with the idea that Francis was a second Christ, the founder in this world of the reign of poverty. The Franciscan monk, like the Buddhist mendicant, is loved by the people, who contrast his sanctity with the profane lives of a wealthy clergy who have become unpopular. The Franciscan rule, like the Buddhistic law, in the thought of the partisans of the '*Eternal Gospel*,' was destined to become the universal law. Had the Franciscan missionaries

succeeded in converting entire countries, as the Jesuits did in Paraguay, they would certainly have established their legend of the 'Conformités;' and such ideas, when they had disappeared from the land of their birth, might have been met with in remote colonies in the shape of peculiar dogmas.

Progress, in many classes of studies, consists in seeing that certain explanations, with which we were satisfied at first, need to be modified. Buddhism springing to life at a given moment from the preaching of one man, and ending at another given moment through the persecutions of its enemies—this is an idea which must certainly be modified. Buddhism, like Vishnuism, like Krishnaism, was the outcome of momentary requirements; it was one of those religious fashions in which the Indian mind delights. As to the persecutions or religious wars which, in India, may have put an end to the rule of Buddha, there are no considerable traces of them to be found. Sometimes the Buddhist preacher may have been insulted by those whose prejudices he offended. 'If he who teaches be attacked, while speaking, with stones, sticks, and spears, if he be insulted and threatened, let him think of me and endure all.'* Sometimes, even, he may have suffered martyrdom.† But religions do not sink under

* Burnouf's 'Lotus de la Bonne Loi,' p. 144; Foucaux's 'L'Enfant égaré,' p. 18.

† Bournouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien,' p. 248 and following.

such trifling misadventures. Hiouen-Thsang's account of the Buddhist massacres, ordered by King Mahirakoula, and of the patience displayed by the victims,* is, no doubt, most striking. On the death of their persecutor, the saints on whom he bestowed the crown of martyrdom experience only a feeling of pity: 'How far he is still,' they say, 'from the term of transmigration!' But Hiouen-Thsang in nowise connects that episode with the destruction of Buddhism in India; it had taken place many centuries before the voyage of the Chinese pilgrim.†

The disappearance of Buddhist Sanscrit books from India, Nepâl excepted, is at first sight a surprising fact. But we must remember that, in Hindustan, books do not last long, and a work that is not assiduously re-copied is doomed to perish. The favour with which Sakya-Mouni's legends were received in the third century before Christ was changed during the following centuries into strong antipathy;‡ but, in the meantime, ardent apostles had carried the doctrine of deliverance to those Mongol races, in whose midst nihilism has always found its securest stronghold. The quiet image of Buddha tranquillised the consciences of thousands of millions of human beings; for centuries it subdued that feeling of revolt which

* 'Mémoires sur les Contrées occidentales,' translation of Stanislas Julien, vol. i., pp. 196, 197.

† *Ibid.*, p. 190.

‡ Théodore Pavie in the *Journal Asiatique*, March, 1841, p. 203.

a sad conception of life and a defective social state make endemic in the central parts of the old continent.

In becoming a popular religion, Buddhism, like Christianity, adopted means to which it never had recourse at the outset. The truth of the saying that anything will produce anything is chiefly illustrated in the history of religions. A religion idealistic in its origin may become gross paganism with a different race: a religion quite without philosophy may become almost purely metaphysical. This explains the strange contrast between these Buddhist Sûtras, founded upon a kind of atheistic or nihilistic philosophy, and the popular religion of which they are the basis—a religion, to all appearance, so similar to Catholicism that it might at first sight have been mistaken for it. In his edicts, Açoka speaks of eternal salvation just as a Christian would.

One of the most touching anecdotes in the 'Mahavastou'* is that of the King of Kalinga, who disbelieved the promises of a future life, declaring that he would change his faith only if his father, whose virtues must have secured him paradise if such a place existed, should return in order to convince him of its reality. The Buddha appeared to him in his father's shape, and in consequence the king renounced his false doctrine.

The Buddha delights in thus gratifying everyone. While crossing a burning plain, millions of

* Senart's edition, p. 38.

devas and genii hasten to open parasols over his head. The blessed one multiplies himself into as many lesser buddhas as there are parasols, in order that all his attendants may have the satisfaction of believing their pious attention accepted. On one occasion Buddha finds himself on the banks of an unfordable river. Some beneficent spirits at once build several bridges for him. The blessed one multiplies himself according to the number of bridges, and everyone believes the Buddha to have crossed over his own bridge, in preference to the others.* A more exact image could not be found for expressing the way in which religious symbols transform themselves, so as to appeal to most different consciences, without, however, losing their unity and the mark of their origin; and, if it may be permitted to call to mind a strophe from a theological poem of quite a different origin:

'Sumit unus, sumunt mille,
Quantum isti, tantum ille,
Nec sumptus consumitur.'

Mahavastou,' p. 48. Cf. 'Essai sur la Légende du Buddha,' p. 291. These miracles of ubiquity please the Hindu fancy. When Krishna dances with one of the shepherdesses of the Bradj, each of them believes he danced wit herself.

THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE.

BESIDES the immense service which the Jews rendered to the world in the matter of religion, by converting it to the belief in one God, we cannot deny that they have also been of the greatest service to us in the matter of science. But for the Jews, the Hebrew Bible, one of the most important monuments of history and philology, would have ceased to exist. It is certain that had Christianity completely absorbed Judaism in the first centuries of our era, the Hebrew text of the Bible would have been lost. Early Christians seem to have very seldom taken the trouble to consult it; according to the country they lived in, they were satisfied with Greek, Latin, or Syriac versions; and even their arguments respecting the Scriptures are often based only upon expressions used in those versions. Almost all of the rare cases in which the Fathers of the Church appeal to the Hebrew text occur in their controversies with the Jews, and their arguments are then taken in most cases from the literal version of Aquila. Origen and St. Jerome are the only exceptions to the foregoing

Journal des Débats, December 8, 1858.

rule; but they were both pupils of the Rabbis, and, though the latter certainly did credit to his masters, it must be confessed that the former was but a very poor Hebrew scholar. Besides, we know the mortifications which the attempt, always suspicious in pious ears, to appeal to the veritable Hebrew text, cost St. Jerome, and also the terrible things he was compelled to hear and even to speak,* until, become wiser, he realized the fact that silence alone should be opposed to such violent anger.† In the Middle Ages again the Synagogue furnished the Church with the only creditable Hebrew scholars it possessed—Raymond Martini, Nicolas de Lyre, Paul of Burgos. Lastly, the Renaissance applied to Jewish masters for the grammatical instruction which, long after, became so fruitful in the hands of European scholars.

The preservation of the original monuments of Hebrew literature thus appears to have been exclusively due to the Jews. Do we appreciate what would have been the enormous loss to the sum of human knowledge, if the text of the Hebrew

* 'Latrantes canes qui adversum me rabido ore desæviunt et circumeunt civitatem' (*Prologus Galeatus*). 'Hydræ sibilantes' (*Præf. in Esdr.*). 'Me fasarium, me clamitant esse sacrilegum, qui audeam aliquid in veteribus libris addere, mutare, corrigere' (*Præf. in Evang.*). Cf. *Prolog. in Job, in Ps., in Dan.*

† 'Rectius fuerat modum furori eorum silentio meo ponere, quam quotidie novi aliquid scriptitantem invidorum insanias provocare' (*Prol. in Jerem.*).

writings had disappeared through the neglect of Christian scholars? Not only would Semitic philology have been sterile, but the whole group of historical studies would have been incomplete in its most essential parts. Of the three or four telescopes through which we may obtain a glimpse of early ages, the most important would be wanting. In a religious point of view the consequences of such a loss would have been quite as serious. The most powerful lever of reformation would not have existed; sound exegesis would have been impossible; the critical spirit of modern times would have wanted the chief stimulus which led it to leave the narrow circle within which the *humanists* of the Renaissance and of the seventeenth century tended to confine it.

I do not wish to elevate the Jewish nation by depreciating two or three other families of the human race which, at the cost of their blood, have preserved for us the records of our origin. Two nations, above all, have in that respect the greatest resemblance to Israel, and share with it the glory of having, as depositaries of the secrets of the primitive world, laid the foundation of philological science: I mean the Brahmins and the Parsees. These two chosen races, like the people of Israel, seem to have had but one object in life —the preservation of a book; they sacrificed to that duty all their other political or intellectual aims. The invaluable service which the Brahmins rendered to the human mind is not sufficiently

appreciated. I do not hesitate to say that next to the Jews we owe most gratitude to the Brahmins. The Jews gave us a religion far above any that might have sprung from the ideas of the race to which we belong; but the Brahmins preserved for us Sanscrit and the Vêdas—that is, the key to our origin, the primitive revelation of our ancestors, to which our conversion to Jewish ideas must not make us indifferent.

A hundred years hence (if these studies, requiring a rare combination of skill, favourable circumstances, and encouragements unlikely to be bestowed in the future, be still progressing) it will be seen that the new element introduced by Sanscrit and the Vêdas in the field of European criticism can only be compared with the unhoped-for texts with which the Greeks of the fifteenth century widened the circle of Latin studies. The marvellous care with which the Brahmins guarded the sacred deposit confided to them is quite as praiseworthy. Since M. Adolphe Regnier published the 'Prâtisakya' of the Rigvêda, we know that the Massorah of the Jews itself could not bear comparison with the wonderful system of precautions, thanks to which the Vêdas have been handed down to us without the slightest variation. And on that subject I cannot repress an exclamation of pity. Harshness towards these thoughtful and serious races who have supplied our omissions is atrocious ingratitude. The England of the past too often forgot this. Her contempt, her

want of comprehension for the Hindu people (I do not, of course, mean here the Mussulman dynasties, so guilty themselves towards that unfortunate people) were a crime against humanity, almost as great as that committed by the Middle Ages in persecuting the Jews. Learned England now appreciates the service rendered to the human mind by those poor mendicants of the streets of Benares—excellent keepers of records, whom the future will rank with the Lascarises and the Bessarions. But she took her time over it. England did not at first realize the value of the treasures which India displayed to her. Her Calcutta scholars, her William Jones, her Colebrooke, though thoroughly conversant with Sanscrit, only looked upon Indian literature as one more among the literatures of Asia. When Germany had applied to those ancient texts her critical genius—precious gift of the Teutonic race, which, it appears, Hengist and Horsa forgot to take on board with them when they crossed the sea—then only was it recognised that they might contain another Bible, not indeed destined to popularity, but supplying the true genealogy of the gods long worshipped by our race.

The Parsees, guardians of the Zend and of the books attributed to Zoroaster, though a worthy people, could not be compared with the Brahmins and the Jews. Certainly what they have taught us is of great importance. Without it the philological value of Sanscrit would not have been understood;

it was the comparison between the Iranian and the Brahminic worlds that proved the common ancestors of the Indo-European race to have had their first settlements in the north of Bactriana, at a period when they still shared the same mythology, the same language, the same institutions. But it must be confessed that the trustees of those precious documents were far less scrupulous in keeping their trust than the Jews and Brahmins. The text of the sacred writings of Persia was often revised; their manuscripts were incorrect, and differed greatly from one another; lastly, the exegesis of the Parsees was so defective, that European science was obliged to reconstruct it; and the interpretation of the Zend-Avesta will probably always be incomplete. Had Anquetil-Duperron been born a century later, our position as regards those books would have been little different from that we occupy towards the most perplexing cuneiform inscriptions.

In the question at issue, we must carefully distinguish between the literal preservation of the sacred text and the preservation of its true sense. The world is generally surprised to hear modern philologists claim to understand the Vêdas better than the Brahmins, and the Bible better than the ancient Jews. Nevertheless, nothing can be more simple. A practical knowledge of the modern tongues of the East helps us but little to understand these monuments. Critical acumen, keenness of mind, the fruits of European culture, are

far more necessary. Philology is of modern creation, and in consequence of the inexperience of the ancients in such studies, it often happened that for centuries texts were revered as sacred whose meaning was completely lost. As I have already said, the Parsees are pretty much in that case; they transmitted their legacy to us as a sealed book, almost without understanding it, and of late years, when the ardour of the past was rekindled within them, they found nothing better to do than to follow the school of Eugène Burnouf. The Brahmins left us a Vedic exegesis, admirable from a grammatical point of view, but philosophically weak. Sayana, their great commentator, helps us no more to grasp the real meaning of the hymns of the Rigveda, than the scholastic arguments of St. Thomas Aquinas enable us to understand ancient Hebrew poetry.

Here, again, the Jews have great advantages. Their exegetical tradition, though susceptible of improvement in many points, generally deserves to be taken into consideration. The knowledge of Biblical Hebrew never was lost to the Jews, and since the tenth century of our era they have possessed a system of teaching grammar copied from that of the Arabs. The perfection with which that great Arabico-Jewish school works is truly surprising. Modern science cannot improve upon it, and it may be said that Rabbi Jona, in the first half of the eleventh century, already skilfully applied the comparative methods which, seven or

eight centuries later, were to give to European philology such incontestable superiority.

In criticism even, the Jewish interpreters always held far more enlightened opinions than the Christian exegetics. Strange though it be, it is the fact that those who only adopted the Old Testament accepted it far more absolutely than the Israelites. The idea of a Biblical canon rigorously dividing inspired from uninspired writings, is a Christian idea, not a Jewish one. 'Judaism,' says one of the most learned Israelites of our day, who is also an accomplished Orientalist,* 'though specially interested in the Old Testament, can accept with equanimity those truths respecting the age and the composition of the various parts of the Bible which no good and sound criticism can possibly ignore. Our old sages never conceived that hard and unyielding idea of a canon which the Christian Church created almost from the beginning. The ancient Rabbis of the Talmud admit with great simplicity their uncertainty as to whether they ought to suppress many a book whose authors are revered to-day as prophets and hagiographers. From the time of Saadia,† who looks upon ten verses as badly turned, down to that of Abraham Ben Ezra,‡

* M. Darenbourg, 'Archives Israëlites,' March, 1856, p. 158.

† Saadias Gaon ben Joseph, Egyptian Rabbi, born in 892, died at Sorah in 942, famous for his explanations of the most difficult passages in the Bible, of which he wrote an Arabic translation, published at Constantinople in 1546.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

‡ A Jewish Rabbi settled among the Arabs.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

who flatly declares that the Book of Isaiah from chapter xl. to the end does not belong to that prophet, how many exegetics among our own most celebrated grammarians and lexicographers have interpreted Scripture with the freedom of unprejudiced minds!'

Nearly all the opinions upon Hebraical literature improperly called rash—since it is in reality the hypotheses of theologians which are gratuitous and arbitrary—are to be met with among mediæval rabbis. At the time of the Renaissance those who see the first glimmer of a rational criticism of the Scriptures are again Jews. The recent discovery, at Venice, of the writings of Leo de Modena,* who was in his time the oracle of Judaism, proves that the most advanced ideas occurred to him. It would be an exaggeration to say that the synagogues favoured this tendency: the ghost of the unfortunate Uriel Acosta† would rise to protest against such an assertion. But at any rate the synagogues did not repress mental activity. In the seventeenth century, while men like Richard Simon, Louis Cappel, Moïse Amyrault,‡

* Famous Rabbi, born at Venice in 1571, died in 1654. His most important work is the 'Biblia Hebræa Rabbinica' (4 vols., Venice, 1610).—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

† Portuguese nobleman, born at Oporto towards the close of the sixteenth century, died in 1647. Was in turn Jewish, Sadducean, sceptical, unbeliever, and ended by suicide. Owes his reputation to a striking work entitled 'Exemplar Vitæ Humanæ.'—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

‡ Richard Simon, French ecclesiastic, wrote the 'Dictionnaire de la Bible' (Lyons, 1693, folio). Louis Cappel,

isolated, persecuted, saw their attempts at innovation doomed to failure by the dogmatic intolerance of their time; while Bossuet delayed for more than a century the progress of exegesis, and left to Germany the glory of its foundation; Spinoza, whose posthumous renown as a metaphysician has led us to forget that during his life he was an exegetic, in his 'Tractatus Theologico-Politicus,' elevated into a general method the rationalistic interpretation of the books which had caused his troubled soul so many struggles. It may then be maintained that, down to the second half of the eighteenth century, the Jews understood the Bible better than the Christians. It is true the Jews were not the initiators of the extraordinary critical movement which, towards the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, entirely remodelled Hebraic philology. That movement is connected with two causes: in the first place, with the progress of Oriental, and especially of Semitic studies, as the Dutch school of Albert Schultens understood them; in the second place, with the great scientific freedom which was developed in the German universities towards the close of the eighteenth century. Germany was

Protestant theologian, born in 1585 near Sedan, famous by his 'Arcanum Punctuationis Revelatum' (Leyden, 1624), Moïse Amyrault. Protestant theologian, born in Lorraine in 1596, known by his treatise 'De la Prédestination,' and his work entitled 'Traité des Religions contre ceux qui les estiment indifferentes.'—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

the first to understand how little honour was done to the Scriptures by claiming for them mild rules of criticism and a privileged immunity; she thought it unnatural that the first condition of sacred criticism should be the abdication of ordinary modes of reasoning. Modern exegesis is thus, taken altogether, an essentially Protestant production. But though the Israelites did not found it, they yet had the signal conscientiousness to adopt its general method and its chief results. To a learned Israelite, M. Munk, we are indebted for the most eloquent defence of the rational method,* and the best compendium published in France before 1848 of those doctrines which, when unacquainted with their history, people characterize as baseless innovations.† Nearly all the great theses of independent criticism are proposed therein with perfect lucidity and courageous sincerity. It may be said that, since Richard Simon, nothing so truly scientific has been published in France on the ancient literature of the Hebrews.

To M. Munk we must add the indefatigable M. Cahen,‡ among the earliest promoters of Hebraic studies, so much neglected with us. M. Cahen's translation is far from attaining the

* They are inserted in M. Cahen's Bible, vol. ii., beginning.

† 'Palestine,' Paris, 1845.

‡ This article was written twenty-five years ago. M. Reuss's translation, now complete, has infinitely surpassed all France possessed then in Biblical exegesis.

ideal of a French translation of the Bible; but we must, in justice, confess that ideal to be unattainable. M. Cahen's object was, above all, to be literal. I am far from depreciating attempts of that kind, when they gain in truthfulness what they lose in elegance; yet, it must be acknowledged, a model translation is not to be sought for in such attempts. It is a mistake to suppose that expressions opposed to the genius of the language into which the translation is made preserve the colour of the original. A language ought never to be spoken incorrectly. When we have once begun, there is no reason why we should stop; and if, under the pretence of being faithful, we make use of idioms which cannot be understood without a commentary, why not frankly resort to that system by which the translator contents himself with giving word for word, little caring whether his translation be as obscure as the original, and leaving the reader to discover the sense? Such licence is, I know, admitted in German; but that is one of the facilities I least envy trans-Rhenish scholars. The French language is puritan; there is no tampering with it. People are not compelled to write it; but when they do undertake that difficult task, they must pass, with hands bound, under the Caudine forks of an authorized dictionary and a grammar consecrated by use.

I admit that these strict obligations give the translator enormous difficulties, especially as re-

gards very ancient works or works created by a genius very different from ours. Every translation is essentially imperfect, being the result of a compromise between two contrary obligations: the first being to render as faithfully as possible the expressions of the original; the other, to remain French. But one of these obligations admits no half-measure—it is the second. The translator's duty is fulfilled only when he has succeeded in rendering the thought of his text into a perfectly correct French sentence. If the work he is translating be quite remote from our habits of mind, that translation must, despite all his efforts, offer strange features, images out of keeping with our taste, particulars that require explanation; but he is absolutely prohibited from breaking the rules of the language. The curious phenomenon which has happened in England, where translations of the Bible, of very moderate merit in every respect, are read by everyone—and in Germany, where the almost literal translation of the same book from the pen of Luther has become classic, could not take place in France. With us a translation will never become a classic. Our taste is too exclusive to admit any of those peculiarities which in old books cannot be suppressed without inaccuracy. This is why the Bible in the vernacular never had, and does not seem likely ever to have, in France the success it has met with everywhere else. The Middle Ages, from the twelfth century, produced

French Bibles fairly good in style,* yet none of them were ever accepted. The Protestant translations of the sixteenth century, which were so efficacious in nourishing the soul, and inspiring a religion strong even to heroism, never could obtain their literary consecration. The Jansenist versions of the seventeenth century are, no doubt, couched in admirable language; but the original colour is effaced. They bear neither an Eastern nor an ancient stamp; besides which, in a philological point of view, they leave much to be desired.

Must we then renounce the hope of ever seeing parts of the Bible translated so as to captivate the attention of the French public? I do not think so. First of all, if it correctly represented the last word of science as regards Biblical exegesis, such a translation, besides its literary merit, would be of paramount importance for all those interested in religious questions. Moreover, there are passages of ancient Hebraic literature which, even in our language, could be made very impressive. I feel convinced that the Canticles, delicately handled, would have infinite charm. If translated in a simple and pure style, the Psalms would still retain part of their penetrating harmony. I shall shortly try what effect may be produced on the public by a French trans-

* *Vide* M. Reuss's learned essays upon this subject in M. Colain's *Revue de Théologie* (January and June, 1851; January and December, 1852; January, 1853; January, February and March, 1857).

lation of the Book of Job, which, while preserving the original rhythm, will make no concession to the idioms of the text. If the effect produced is not that of a grand and bold work, bearing the characteristics of the earliest antiquity, it will be the fault of the translator. But all those attempts can only result in literary and scientific productions. They will never bring forth a book like that which Luther gave his country. France cut herself off from the possibility of having a great religious book in her own tongue on the day when, faithful to the Roman tradition, she refused to give up Latin, and proclaimed her language not holy enough for prayer. One of the most essential elements in the nobility of ancient tongues has thus been refused to ours; it has continued profane; it has missed the stamp of the ideal, because it has never been made the medium of man's appeal to God.

THE TEAZIEHS OF PERSIA.

ASIA, although an irrevocable sentence of decay long since went forth against her, is not, in our days, so sterile in a literary point of view as might be expected. The literature of Hindostan is, in the nineteenth century, at least as fruitful as it ever has been. In Syria, and above all at Beyrouth, the apparently sapless trunk of Arabic literature is putting forth a vigorous offshoot. Of late years, the course of study at Constantinople has been lacking in originality, though presenting some curious points. But it is Persia which, in spite of her decadence, offers the most remarkable symptoms of literary renaissance. In the first place, Persia is the region of Western and Southern Asia which reads her classical masterpieces with most taste and enthusiasm. Perhaps, also, there is no Asiatic country where the ancient spirit of the nation is more likely to rise again. Persia, thanks to the schism which isolated her in the midst of Islam, has preserved the characteristics of her primitive genius better than the countries swayed by that kind of Catholicity which Sunnism, with its Khalif Sultan, tried to realize. The wonderful re-

ligious attempt of the Bâbis illustrated the power of the old mystic and pantheistic leaven which the Arab conquest could not eradicate. Sûfism and dervishism are, in their own way, protests against the ruling religion. Lastly, the exaggerated sentiments professed by the *Chiites* towards Ali, by providing them with a pretext for anathematizing Ali's murderers—that is, the very columns of official Islamism—opened to their imagination a way of escape from the narrow walls within which true Mussulmans willingly confine themselves.

From this ever-living source whence the Persians derive almost all their motives for love or hate—from the *Chiitish* passion, from the singular paradox of a patriotism at bay, seeking arguments and incitements in a murder committed nearly thirteen hundred years ago and in a retrospective discussion of a question of succession—sprang the most original cluster of compositions which Asia has produced in our days. We know that, to the *Chiites*, the tragical deaths of Ali and his two sons, Hassan and Hossein, are analogous to what Christ's Passion is to Christians. The month of *Moharram*, devoted to those gloomy recollections, is, like our Holy Week, full of images and scenes of mourning. The traditional legend recited on these anniversaries as a dialogue, reminds us of the form of service in our churches on Palm Sunday. Europeans who have heard that recital among the Metuali Chiites of Syria, assure me that nothing could be more beautiful or

more touching. From such a recitation, by several personages, it was but a step to the *Mystery*, as a scenic performance. That step, however, has only been taken in our days. It would be rash to affirm that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Chiitish enthusiasm did not sometimes give dramatic representations of incidents relating to the Passion of Ali and of his sons. But it was not till our days that such representations became a species of literature, and grew into regular and well-defined compositions.

I.

To M. Alexander Chodzko and to M. de Gobineau we owe the knowledge of these curious compositions, the result, as we see, of conditions similar to those that gave rise to our mediæval Mysteries. In a volume entitled 'Les Religions et les Philosophies de l'Asie Centrale' (Paris, 1865), M. de Gobineau faithfully described their character, and translated with unusual talent one of the most original pieces, 'Kassim's Wedding' ('Les Noces de Cassem'). M. Chodzko bought at Teheran a manuscript containing thirty-three similar dramas, which has since been purchased by the Bibliothèque Nationale. From this plentiful source M. Chodzko selected five pieces, of which he has just published a translation.*

* 'Théâtre Persan, choix de Téazies ou Drames,' translated for the first time from the Persian by M. Chodzko, Assistant Lecturer to the Collège de France (Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1878, Elzevir size).

I do not know any more instructive reading. This little book will charm all who feel an interest in religious manifestations as the most perfect image of the genius of different peoples.

We must first of all picture to ourselves the stage and the material circumstances attending the performance. This sometimes takes place in the *tekiehs*—large porticos built for the purpose; at other times in public places, in caravansaries, in the yards of mosques and palaces. In most cases the expenses are borne by some rich man, anxious to acquire popularity or to express his gratitude to Heaven. It is the most meritorious of deeds; the indulgences it procures are, as the Persians say, 'bricks we bake on earth with which to build our heavenly palace.'

According to the season,* large pieces of canvas are fixed over the place to protect the actors from the weather. The galleries and windows overlooking the stage are reserved for the guests, among whom are always the members of the Diplomatic Corps and other distinguished foreigners. The Persians do not hesitate to admit Christians to their sacred dramas; it is even remarkable that the Europeans (Frengui), as opposed to the Turks and to the Arabs, play in those dramas a part nearly always favourable to Ali. The Chiites rather delight in showing the

* The Mussulman year being lunar, the month of Moharram may fall in any season.

Christians nearer to the truth, and above all things more compassionate, more humane, than the Arabs and the Sunnites. In one of these dramas we see the European Ambassador supporting the Imâm's rights to the khalifate; in another, a French lady testifies to an extraordinary miracle, intended to disclose some previously unknown instance of the wickedness of Ali's murderers.

The women generally sit in a reserved compartment, on small stools which they bring with them. The rest of the spectators squat in the Persian fashion. The *sekka* (water-sellers), with their leathern bags slung across the shoulders and a saucer in their hands, are busy offering water to the company, in remembrance of the thirst Ali and his followers suffered when crossing the desert of Kerbela in the heart of summer. This is regarded as a good work, and is nearly always performed in consequence of a vow. For instance, if a child be sickly, his parents will vow to make a *sekka* of him during one or more seasons, in honour of Imâm Hossein, if he reaches such or such an age. These little water-carriers are said to be extremely graceful. Richly clad, their eyelashes and eyebrows painted deep blue, wearing their hair in floating curls, their heads adorned with caps of Kashmeer cloth which glitter with pearls and precious stones, they move about, offering iced-water and sometimes sherbet to the audience. Then there are those who let pipes on hire, dealers in pastilles made of the earth of the Kerbela desert and per-

fumed with musk, and the sellers of cakes and dainties. The public accommodated in the galleries and windows sip black coffee and smoke narguilehs. The *ferrâches*, armed with sticks, walk gravely about, and keep order.

The space reserved for the performers is separated from the pit by a very frail barrier, the protection of which gives the *ferrâches* a world of trouble. That reserved space is in the centre of the enclosure, so that the actors are visible from all sides. In the middle is a carpeted platform, supporting an armchair, upon which is seated the *rouzekhan*, or reciter of the traditions, surrounded by half a dozen children as choristers. The function of the *rouzekhan* is to prepare the spectators for painful impressions by sermons and legends recited in prose, or sung in verse. At a given moment he casts his turban to the ground, tears his garments, smites his breast, and pulls his beard. Nearly everyone imitates him ; they uncover their shaven heads, and inflict wounds on them with the points of their poniards, the blood streaming down their faces. Then the performance, properly speaking, begins. There being no scenery and no green-room, all the actors are on the stage together. Each speaks in turn, and seats himself when he has nothing to say.

The style of these open-air dramas too often shows the prolixity and want of vigour which, for centuries, have characterized nearly all Eastern productions. The language employed is quite

commonplace; it does not go beyond the ordinary resources of exuberant facility. What astonishes us is the inventive variety displayed in all the details. Nowhere else does one see so clearly the difference between Arabian and Persian genius. Arabia possesses neither drama nor epic. Persia always had the epic, and begins to possess a drama. The truth is, they are akin. Æschylus knew that he was descended from Homer; drama and epic proceed from a common source—mythology and national spirit. It seems strange to speak of mythology in Islam; but, as we have said, Persia is only superficially Mussulman. It was by a kind of heterodox instinct that she madly embraced the worship of Ali, as a revenge on the Arabs and true Islamism. To these ardent imaginations, Ali is no longer a mere historical personage; he is a Vishnu, a Krishna, a Christ. His life has become an Indian Pûrana, an apocryphal Gospel. Because of Ali and for him God created heaven and earth. From pole to pole, the world has no hope of salvation but through Ali. Ali is the key to all the enigmas of humanity, the *Nilometer* of heaven and earth, the *Kibla* of the universe, the sole source of all that lives, the master of the created world, of mortals and of spirits. He it is who illuminates the sun and the moon; he is the giant who supports the edifice of religion; the dispenser of the water of Heaven and the fire of Hell. Hassan and Hossein are the jewels set in the throne of God;

their names uttered in the abode of the blessed cause the seventh heaven to bow with respect. Thus, though expelled for a time, nature always returns. Vanquished by Islam, Persia has found means to re-create for herself a mythology, and at the same time to gratify her ill-humour by representing the founders of Islamism as impostors, the Khalifs as usurpers, and Omar as a vulgar rogue, insensible to pity.

The fecundity of imagination which the authors of Persian dramas have placed at the service of these ardent passions is truly surprising. The Arabian *Kasida*, without narrative or stage display, is like a long arabesque, artistically wrought, cold, and unimpressive. But here, all is romance. Shakespeare himself would have witnessed these mysteries with pleasure; he would have recognised his kindred by that deep, impressive thrill which pervades the whole frame and strangely excites the nerves. M. de Gobineau has skilfully analyzed one of the most peculiar of these religious dramas, entitled 'The Christian Lady.' The piece seems to have been composed subsequently to M. Chodzko's journey, or rather it is a skilful adaptation of the 'Monastery of European Monks,' which is contained in the manuscript in the 'Bibliothèque Nationale.' The prologue is unequalled for boldness. A European lady, crossing, by accident, the plains of Kerbela, orders her tent to be pitched. The first stake is driven into the ground; a long jet of blood spurts forth from the earth,

real red blood, besmearing everything around, and sending a thrill of horror through all who are present. A second stake is driven in; blood spurts forth again; a third, blood spurts forth everywhere. The European lady flees, in horror, from the spot, and falls asleep. Christ, her prophet, appears to her in a dream, tells her where she is, relates the whole story of Kerbela, and, for the first time, divulges to her a monstrous crime committed by a Bedouin, which even surpasses the limits of Arabian wickedness as conceived by Persians.

The five dramas published by M. Chodzko form a kind of chronological series, extending from the last days of Mahomet to the assassination of Ali and the death of his sons. The great defect of the historical Mahomet is his extreme impassiveness. The legendary Mahomet of the *Chiites* is melancholy and tearful. There is great skill in the scene where an Arab, with the base and vindictive spirit of his race, insists that, by the law of retaliation, the dying prophet shall receive a lash from a whip on his naked shoulders. The forebodings which fill the last days of Mahomet, the visions which embitter the close of his life by revealing to him that the Arabs will kill all the saints of his family, are very artistic. The drama entitled 'Fatima's Garden' is exceedingly touching. The prophet has just died; all good Mussulmans are in mourning. Ali secludes himself in prayer. His rivals take advantage of the

situation to carry on intrigues.' Through an excess of modesty and delicacy Ali misses his election to the Khalifate. Omar's brutality then breaks out. 'The reason of the people,' he says, 'is in their eyes.' Aboubekr's Khalifate will be secure only when Fatima shall have been driven away from her father's garden, where she spends her days in tears. Omar undertakes that feat; he forces the door open, and strikes Fatima, who miscarries. Ali's life is only spared by the intervention of foreigners and Christians, who go to Aboubekr and beseech him to put an end to Omar's barbarity.

There is genuine pathos in the martyrdom of Ali. The distress of the little Kulsoum, Ali's daughter, is natural and true. 'Hast thou then forgotten thy poor Kulsoum, father dear? To whom wilt thou leave me? If sometimes I want to kiss thee, to see thee, where shall I find thee? Who will console me for thy absence? Do not leave me here alone. Entrust me to some one as good and kind as thyself.' Ali's mystical serenity, his parting with Gamber, his servant, are really fine.

'*Ali.*—Be calm, be patient, my poor Gamber. Do not give thyself up to despair. When I am gone, thou wilt wait upon Hassan and Hossein, in order to deserve eternal salvation, beside the Master of all. Do not distress thyself, friend; after me my two sons will secure thy welfare on earth and in heaven.

'*Gamber.*—Body of the prophet, star of the

seventh heaven, soul of God's abode, rose of the garden of religion, and friend of Allah, ah! what glorious days were those when, riding Duldul,* thou usedst to dazzle the eyes of our enemies by the sun of victory which glittered on the gold of thy stirrup. I followed thee everywhere, proud of my master's grandeur; and Gamber, little atom, bathed himself in the streams of light of thy glory. Henceforth, how can I look upon Zulfekar,† oh my King? With what eyes shall I behold Duldul? Speak, oh! speak, master! At the sight of thy sword and of thy horse, like myself, bereaved of their master, what can Gamber do but rend his beard and his garments?

'*Ali.*—Duldul will forget me no more than thou, old friend. Forgive me all the pain thou hast endured so many long years. Approach, Hassein and Hossein! I confide Gamber to your care; he has always served me with devotion and loyalty; he has had all my confidence. Take care of him, children, and, by your kindness, make him forget that I no longer live.

'*Gamber.*—I have a wish, a prayer, to address to thee, my prince. Before thou departest from this land of anguish, I would see thee once more on Duldul; mount him, oh my sovereign, and let me once more walk by the side of thy stirrup; let me gather the dust from the shoes of the noble

* The name of Ali's horse.
† The name of Ali's sword.

animal. I shall rub my eyes with it, it is a priceless eye-salve.

'*Ali.*—I am no longer allowed to ride Duldul. Death has already saddled his steed for me. I shall mount him soon, and ride across other fields. Go, Gamber, my brave equerry, throw a black shroud over my favourite horse; tell him he no longer has a master; the cruelty of fate snatches him away. . . .

'*Gamber* (goes out and comes back, leading the favourite horse).—Come, Duldul, let me veil thee in black trappings. The miscreants, the infamous barbarians, have martyred our master. Thou art sad; thou knowest, my friend Duldul, that thy rider, thy prince, is expiring in his own blood. Do not resist, let me dress thee in mourning. Let me cover my head with the dust thou treadest, and then expire at thy feet. Let me press to my lips that saddle, those stirrups. Ali was all my joy, all my wealth.'

II.

The most striking of the dramas published by M. Chodzko is certainly that entitled 'The Monastery of European Monks.'* The chief personage is the head of the Imam Hossein. Yezid's army has retreated, carrying with it the heads of the martyrs. An alarm suddenly breaks out; a troop of Ali's partisans comes up to recover the heads.

* 'European,' 'Frengui,' is here synonymous with 'Christian.'

Being close to a Christian convent, the Arabs seek refuge there for the night.

'*Chemr.*—Inmates of the Christian monastery, you who obey the laws of Jesus, can you receive us for one night within your walls? We will enter as true friends.

'*The Prior.*—Who art thou, and whence comest thou with that army? Explain thy secret intentions. What seekest thou amongst monks, chief of the warriors? If thou art looking for one of ourselves, declare his name.

'*Chemr.*—The army thou seest, composed of white men and of negroes, marches under the banner of the Khalif Yediz. An Arab having had the ambition to become Khalif, our sovereign directed us to let him know what he thought of it. He sent me with the whole of his army, and the edge of my dagger did the rest. Know that, through my valour, the pretender, a few days ago, was made to bite the dust. As for his head, we are taking it to Damascus as a present for the Khalif. All the members of his family fell into our hands. They are here, loaded with chains, and we return to Damascus vigorous and full of joy. Overtaken by night in your oasis, we beg for hospitality under the roof of your monastery. Do not refuse shelter to our soldiers, exhausted by a long march.

'*The Prior.*—Our monastery is not large enough to accommodate all that crowd. The army

should set up its camp outside the boundaries of the convent. You may entrust your prisoners to us; we will take care of them. Let us also have those heads, radiant with aureoles. The sight of them fills my heart with affection.

'*Chemr.*—As thou wilt. Take the heads, brave monk; they are those of the rebels of the Prophet Mahomet's family. Guard well the skulls of those usurpers; but take especial care of that of the so-called chief of their religion.

'*The Prior* (taking the head of Imam Hossein from a spear).—Good God! that head looks to me like some newly-opened tulip! The eyes of this earthly globe would grow blood-red with weeping over it. Almighty Lord! whence comes that head besmeared with clotted blood? To what zodiac does that star belong? From what shell came that royal pearl?

'*The Head of Imam Hossein* (speaks in Arabic)—Do not think that God takes no heed of the injustices committed by the wicked (Coran, xiv. 43).

'*The Prior.*—Almighty Lord! Have I heard aright? Whence comes that voice that stirs my inmost soul? Its melodious tones vibrate through heaven and earth. It has entered the ear of my mind. Is it a dream? But I am awake . . . What is it, then? Can it be the angel Asrafil, sounding the trumpet of the day of resurrection?

'*The Head* (recites).—Those who practise iniquity will some day see what fearful fate

their conduct will bring upon them (Coran, xxvi. 228).

'*The Prior.*—Brother monks, come hither! Tell me, did you hear that voice? Tell me, for the love of God, whence comes that plaintive melody? It absorbs my senses, and the calmness of my heart abandons me. Those wailings seem to come from heaven.

'*A Monk.*—Be convinced, worthy Prior, that those sighs and groans are uttered by the mouth of that severed head. The lips move as they repeat the verses of the Pentateuch; they explain to us the mysterious meaning of the Gospel . . . But no; when I listen more attentively, how marvellous! the movements of that tongue, wonderfully eloquent, are piously repeating the verses of two chapters of the Coran.

'*The Prior.*—In heaven's name, oh Head! answer me! To what soul of man didst thou belong? Faded rose, from what garden hast thou been plucked? The light of eternal salvation shines on thy cheeks. Tell me, Head! at the banquet of what monarch art thou the light? Ah! if Jesus Christ had left us a successor like thee in this world! . . . Soul of the Universe, who art thou? Bleeding skull, answer my questions; thou knowest all things. From the midst of the garden of faith call by its name the bird of my spirit. Canst thou be Moses, or the miraculous breath of Jesus? Open thy mouth whence marvels flow; explain to me this prodigy.

'*The Head.*—I am the martyr of Kerbela; my name is Hossein; my work is to destroy the enemies of God. A newly-blown rose in the flower-bed of true religion, my grandfather was Mahomet, Ali was my father, and the best of women brought me to life. My birth-place was the city of Medina; my resting-place is in the sands of the desert of Kerbela.

'*The Prior.*—Fruit of the tree of Fatima's orchard! Beautiful cypress, which Fatima's motherly hands delighted in caressing! Oh! cursed for ever be he who severed thee from thy body, thou who causedst Fatima's tearful eyes to shine with joy! Hear me, monks! Hasten to bring musk and phials of rose-water. It is a meritorious deed to perfume those heads; I will embalm them all, especially that of Fatima's beloved. Spread amber and perfumes, and strew flowers over the tresses and the brows of Mahomet's family.

'*A Monk.*—Prior, receive from our hands the musk and rose-water. It is our duty to adore these heads. To-morrow they will intercede with God on our behalf, plunged as we are to the neck in the slough of sin.

'*The Prior.*—Would I could fall a victim for each of the locks of thy hair, Imam Hossein, martyr of the path of God! Oh, would I were the ransom of thy tortured soul! Thanks to the light which beams from thy head, elect of two worlds! our cell has become an object of envy

to celestial palaces. Where art thou, Fatima? Come and dress the hair of thy beloved son; cleanse his locks with thy tears! Where is thy illustrious grandfather—the messenger of God? Where is thy glorious lord, Ali, the prince of men?

'*Enter a* Hatef *or* Public-crier.

'*The Hatef.*—Heed carefully the scenes of affliction about to be unrolled before your eyes. Here is the spirit of the first man created by God: he comes to this monastery to pay a visit of condolence to the Head of Imam Hossein. Prophet Adam is here with tearful eyes.

'*Adam.*—Martyr of Kerbela, joy of Mahomet's eyes! why is thy radiant head separated from thy body? Hail to thee, glory of both worlds, martyred on the road to God! Glorious Imam, accept Adam's homage, who would be proud to suffer as thy substitute. Resplendent head, thou shalt henceforth shine in the midst of eternal bliss. Thanks to thy martyrdom, soul elect of God! thou wilt appear before His throne, radiant with purity.

'*The Hatef.*—Now arrives Abraham, the friend of God. He comes here, weeping, to pay his visit of condolence. He utters sighs and groans. Hasten to meet the friend of God, and to do him honour; he comes from above, and with sobs offers to the glorious deceased the tribute of his grief.

'*Abraham.*—I, the friend of God, have come to see the head of Imam Hossein. I who built the sanctuary of *Caaba*, and laid in it that stone, towards which, night and day, are turned all the looks, all the hopes of true believers, I hail thee, pride of two worlds, victim of crime! Hail to thee, joy of the maternal heart of the best of women. Abraham would indeed think it bliss to serve as a ransom for thee, radiant head—to die for thee, blood-stained trunk.

'*The Hatef.*—Fall back, monks! give place to Jesus, who has come to mourn over the illustrious offspring of the line of prophets. He has come to pay his visit of condolence to the prince of the universe. Here he is, Mary's child, who, from the top of the seventh heaven, comes down with Moses.

'*Jesus.*—I am Jesus, the Spirit of God, my eyes swollen with tears. I come here to fulfil the duties owing to the Head of Hossein. Rose of Ali's flower-garden, light of his eyes, I hail thee! Victim of barbarous men, fallen on the desert of misfortune, receive my homage! Oh that all the good works for which Jesus, persecuted like thee, has found merit in the eyes of God, might serve as thy ransom, noble head! Would I were

[9] In Arabic, the *Keblah*, a famous black stone said by Mussulmans to have been presented by the angel Gabriel to Abraham, on the occasion of his building the original Caaba, which is said to be still extant, and composed of an oblong stone building within the great Mosque at Mecca.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

sacrificed to thy brow surrounded by a halo, to thy immaculate forehead! What faithless traitor committed that unheard-of sacrilege? How did they dare to lay hands on that guiltless head! Draw near, Orator of God,* approach, behold the features of the King of Piety! This blessed existence, this ray of light which emanated from the eyes of the mercy of the two worlds, has been extinguished!

'*Moses.*—Hail to thee, Hossein's blood-stained skull! What fiend has defiled himself with such a crime? A thousand maledictions on the impious one who laid low the palm-like grace of thy princely stature, oh Hossein!'

The scene reaches the height of pathos when, to salute the martyr, his father Ali, his grandfather Mahomet, and his brother Hassan appear successively. Then takes place a procession of celebrated women.

'*The Hatef.*—Stand aside! The Mother of Mankind approaches. Her eyes full of tears, Eve visits the grandson of our Prophet. Adam's illustrious companion, full of grief, comes to see the Head of Hossein disfigured with thirst.

'*Eve.*—I salute thee, Head of Hossein, bathed in blood. That swan-like neck, the favourite resting-place for the Prophet's brow, has been severed by the hatred of barbarians. What mur-

* Moses' name among the Mussulmans.

derer raised a sacrilegious hand against that head crowned with an aureole? Tell me. Where are thy sisters Zeineb and Kulsoum? Why do I not see here thy mournful orphans? One word of thine would thrill my heart with joy.

'*The Hatef.*—Make room! The mother of Isaac, the victim of God, draws near, with tearful eyes; here is the noble Agar,* spouse of Abraham, the friend of God. She comes to weep over the Head of Hossein, king of men and demons.† See how much she suffers, what sighs and lamentations swell her bosom!

'*Agar.*—I am Agar, the prey to the deepest grief; my eyes weep tears of blood. Separated from thee, martyr, Agar must give herself up to groans and lamentations. I hail thee, light of Fatima's eyes! noble head of the edifice which sheltered mortals. Since thy death the abode of angels and demons has become a house of mourning.

'*The Hatef.*—The Mother of Rachel has come to wail over the Head of Hossein, the Imam of the century. She strikes her breast with her clenched hands, tears her hair, and bursts into tears—all this she does to honour the obsequies of the chief of martyrs.

* There is here a confusion between Ishmael and Isaac.

† The word 'demon' is here taken in its original Greek acceptation—*δαίμων*, a spirit similar to those termed angels in the Scriptures, and therefore not necessarily evil.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

'*Rachel.*—I, Joseph's mother, bring here a heart broken with sorrow because of the sad end of Hossein, the prince of the century. I hail thee, Head of Hossein, steeped in blood. My son Joseph is thy faithful servant. I would sacrifice my life to reanimate thy face, pale as the moon! Accursed for ever be the murderer who insulted thy mortal remains, Hossein!

'*The Hatef.*—This woman who approaches with moans and sadness is Jethro's daughter. The grief she feels has made her soul resemble a cloak torn to shreds. She strikes her head with both hands, and sobs at the sight of Hossein's severed head.

'*Jethro's Daughter.*—I would a thousand times have sacrificed my soul to thee, oh Hossein, light of the eyes of the world! I am Jethro's daughter. Homage to thy radiant head, oh Imam Hossein! to that head whose splendour cannot be dimmed even by the blood that bathes it! All the cherubs of heaven grieve like me. I have not strength to gaze longer on thy severed head. For one look from thee I would myself be slain.

'*The Hatef.*—I see the Mother of Jesus approaching. She is distressed, she sighs, she covers with ashes her floating hair. The nearer she comes to the Head of Hossein the more fertile are her lips in ejaculation, her eyes in tears. She is anxious to honour fitly the demise of Ali's descendant.

'*Mary.*—I, Mary, full of grief, distressed and

distracted, cover myself with ashes because of thee. Oh, would to God Mary had been sacrificed instead of that beloved head! Would to God the whole earth had given way rather than become the scene of so atrocious a crime! Poor Fatima! when she learns what has happened to the light of her eyes, when she sees that her Hossein has been massacred by vile soldiers, poor mother! her shrieks will bring down the last judgment on this earth. Accept my homage, light of the eyeballs of Fatima! Oh seventh heaven, hear my cries, my maledictions! Oh God! blind Mary's eyes, spare her the sight of the mutilated corpse of the most beloved of Imams!

'*The Hatef.*—Now comes the mother of Moses, to look at the Head of the chief of men and of genii. She approaches Hossein's Head, smiting her brow and her bosom.

'*Moses' Mother.*—Head, fallen under the enemy's sword, receive my homage. Tell me, who severed thee from thy beautiful body? Who is the infamous traitor that is guilty of this crime? Hail to thee, decapitated corpse, abandoned to the wolves of the desert! May God allow this spectacle to blind me, that I may never again behold in such a state the relics of the jewel of the universe!'

The emotion reaches its climax when Hadija, Hossein's grandmother, and his mother Fatima, make their entrance. The Prior of the Convent, converted by so many miracles, becomes a *Chiite.*

'*The Prior.* — Hossein, remembrance left to mortals by the gallant Ali, my brain burns with the love thou hast inspired. Grant my humble request, martyr fallen under the steel of the impious. I desire thee to convert me to thy creed. Oh Hossein! I renounce the stole of the Christian priest.

'*The Head.*—Recite after me the profession of faith of Islam; say:

'"I confess that there is no other God than Allah, and that Mahomet is the messenger of Allah, and that Ali is the friend of Allah."

'*The Prior.*—Oh God! on the day of the last judgment, remember the words I pronounce:

'"I confess there is no other God than Allah."'

Thus the mystic genius of Persia has given Islamism that in which it was wanting: an ideal of tenderness and suffering, themes over which to weep, lamentations, a Passion. This is an absolute necessity in all religions. From the Adonia* to the Holy Week, every creed has had scenes and litanies which occasion tears. It is so sweet to weep over a redeeming God, over a victim who offers himself for the salvation of the faithful; to raise the *planctus naturæ*, 'in the midst of that den of iniquities we call the world.' This senti-

* Called thus from Adonis; they consisted in mournful religious celebrations in honour of the death of Adonis.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

ment is almost foreign to Arabian Islamism, a purely virile religion, meant solely for men. In the legend of Jesus, according to the Mussulman Sunnites, Jesus does not suffer; he is not crucified. Nor is there anything in Mahomet's life, as written by the orthodox, to inspire sentiments of tenderness and pity. The *Chiites* created the virtue of resignation in the persons of Ali and his sons, without direct imitation of the Christian Passion, though based upon the same sentiments. Expiation, of which Sunnism bears no trace, is at the root of *Chiism*. The old Persian fate—the true God of Iran—we meet again in these dramas, with the same sad dignity as in the *Shah-nameh*. Ali suffers because it is the will of fate, and also for his *Chiitish* people, that the merit of his sufferings may be placed to their credit. Height of heroism! To make the sacrifice efficacious the victim must accept his martyrdom. A fine scene in the drama entitled 'The Messenger of God' is that in which Mahomet obtains the consent of Ali and Fatima to their sons' death:

'*Fatima.*—Good God! must they, my two sons, renounce life and become martyrs? What have they done to deserve that punishment, as fearful as it is disgraceful? Thou hast ever acted towards thy people as a sovereign full of solicitude for their welfare. Are they ungrateful and criminal enough to dare to raise their hands against the princes of thy family?

'*The Prophet.*—The martyrdom of my offspring does not proceed from any fault of theirs. They would all live, if life were the reward of merit. But their martyrdom alone can ensure the salvation of my followers and testify in their favour on the day of resurrection. God Himself has decreed it. Thy husband and I have already acquiesced in the Divine will; conform thyself to it in thy turn, my daughter; ensure the eternal happiness of my people! Give thy consent and thou shalt become the dawn of their blessed eternity; thy assent will shield them against the onslaughts of evil. God requires that this covenant shall bear thy seal. On a word of thine depends the salvation of millions of believers.

'*Fatima.*—Since true believers must be saved at the price of my misfortune, I consent to be the most unfortunate of mothers; I consent that this calamity shall take its course!'

These passages always produce transports of indignation in the crowd. And when Omar exclaims: 'Bewail no more, Ali! Recite the prayers of the dying, and kneel down, that at a blow I may cut off thy head,' loud sobs are heard. The women who take part in the performance help in a great measure to give it its character. In contrast to the Sunnites, whose women have scarcely any religion, feminine piety is very strong among the *Chiites*. Nearly all the *Teaziehs* contain a few well-turned compliments addressed to the female assistants.

'*Hossein.*—Mother, what wilt thou give to those women who will honour the remembrance of my tragical death? For, in the supreme moment of resurrection, when lifting their heads from the tomb, they all, as to-day, will hope to see me.

'*Fatima.*—Reassure thyself, light of my eyes! I swear to thee, by the unrivalled splendour of God, that when they reach the gates of Paradise, standing with uncovered heads, their eyes in tears, their hearts on fire, as they were when celebrating thy funeral rites here below, they will find me there. I shall call to me only those who wept for thee. Having led them into the gardens of eternal delight, I shall myself install them there.'

And elsewhere:

'*Fatima.*—Distress not thyself, oh joy of my eyes! Truly, as God is glorious and unequalled in His essence, I shall have, in the abode of the blessed, no other friends but those women who have assisted in celebrating the mysteries in thy honour. I shall wait for them at the gates of Paradise, and lead them to my palace. They need but come as they appeared on the anniversary of thy martyrdom, their heads uncovered, their eyes full of tears, and their hearts on fire.'

None of our mediæval Mysteries is, in my opinion, written with such breadth and passion. Hatred is wanting in our Mysteries. Christianity

is uncontested. Odious personages, such as Herod, the Jews, the Pagans, move in such an obscure and distant background, that indignation is blunted before it reaches them. But in Persia, the rage against the Arabs and the Sunnites generally never slumbers. An appeal to it will always command success. It is necessary to read M. Chodzko's volume in its entirety, if we would understand the originality and the power of this new kind of literature, born, so to speak, before our eyes. Popular spirit alone can produce a living work. It appears that Persians who are acquainted with Europe express surprise at the interest we take in the *Teaziehs*. 'What!' they say, 'you, who have such a fine theatre, what can you find in these productions of an art which is still in its infancy?' It is because sincerity is everything in literature. The most imperfect expression of deep feeling is superior to the cleverest artifices meant to amuse a worn-out public.

JOACHIM DI FLOR AND THE ETERNAL GOSPEL.

[The researches which form the greatest part of this work were made in 1852, at the request of the venerable Dean of the 'Faculté des Lettres' of Paris, M. Victor le Clerc. Having to speak of the 'Eternal Gospel' in tome xxiv. of the 'Histoire littéraire de la France,' M. le Clerc was anxious to know what the Manuscript Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale, with which I was then connected, contained respecting that obscure question. Some time before his death, my learned master returned me the Study which I had made for him, and authorized me to publish it. I added to it some generalities intended to enable cultured readers to grasp the subject, and the whole work appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1st July, 1866). In 1861, M. Xavier Rousselot had published an essay entitled 'Histoire de l'Evangile éternel,' which was not without merit, but scarcely approached questions of criticism. In 1867, there appeared a so-called second edition, under the title of 'Etude d'Histoire religieuse aux XII^e^ et XIII^e^ Siècles; Joachim de Flore, Jean de Parme, et la Doctrine de l'Evangile éternel.' In the preface, the author declares that, having read my work, he found nothing in it to modify his first opinions. M. Paul Meyer pointed out (*Revue Critique*, 25th April, 1868) that, had such modifications been produced in the minds of the honourable professor, he would have found it difficult to give them expression, since what he calls a second edition is but the issue of 1861 with a new title. M. J. A. Schneider's pamphlet, 'Joachim von Floris und die Apokalyptiker des

Mittelalters' (Dillingen, 1872), has little original value. In 1874, in the 'Mémoires' of the Academy of Munich (vol. xii., part 3), M. Preger published a paper entitled 'Das Evangelium æternum und Joachim von Floris.' M. Preger was unacquainted with my work published in 1866. Had he read it he would, I believe, have avoided some errors, and not have adopted the paradoxical thesis that all the writings which bear Joachim's name were, without exception, fabrications of the sectaries of the middle of the thirteenth century. In his pamphlet, "Della Vita, e delle opere dell' Abbate Gioachino' (Milan, 1872), Dom Bernardo Antonio de Riso, a monk of Monte Casino, now Bishop of Catanzaro, adopts my conclusions. In the third volume of his work entitled 'Die Bettelorden und die Universität Paris in der 1 Hälfte des 13 Jahrhunderts,' the Rev. Father Denifle will treat of the question in all its developments. I decided on publishing the present work only after I had ascertained that some years will elapse before the researches of this learned ecclesiastic are made public.]

THE fundamental idea of Christianity at its birth was faith in the coming inauguration of the kingdom of God, which would renew the world and establish in it the everlasting felicity of saints. On several occasions, Jesus declared that His hearers would not taste of death before having witnessed His second advent; all the first generation of Christians believed that at any moment they might behold in the sky the great sign, which was to foretell the advent of the Son of Man. The author of the Apocalypse, bolder still, calculated the days. When, as the world still went on, complaisant explanations smoothed away these too precise prophecies, the boundless hopes which lay at the heart of the new religion did not perish.

An uninterrupted line of enthusiasts, in one sense very sincere disciples of Jesus, was continued from century to century, and continued to announce the approaching fulfilment of the promise. This grand instinct of the future has been the strength of Christianity, the secret of its ever-renewed youth. What are the congregations of the Latter-day Saints (who find recruits in England and in the United States even now) but in their own way the remnants of the old spirit, the direct fruit of the Apocalypse, a party of belated millenarians cherishing in this nineteenth century the hopes which consoled the first believers?

Of all the Utopias born of those aspirations towards a new state of mankind, intended to realize what before was only image and prophecy, the most original was incontestably the attempt of the religious and monastic sect which in the thirteenth century pretended to reform the church and the world, and boldly inscribed on its banner, *The Eternal Gospel*. The failure of that attempt, the severities it aroused, destroyed the monuments by which we might have known it best. Minute inquiries are necessary to recover any trace of those bold innovations, and in the following essay we shall often have to adopt the methods usually admitted in learned rather than in popular publications. But the fact which we are now investigating is, perhaps, the most extraordinary in the most important period of the Middle Ages; nothing should appear puerile or

over-minute when the object in view is to revive the memory of those who loved humanity and suffered in the hope of serving it.

I.

JOACHIM DI FLOR.

A half legendary name shines brightly at the head of the doctrine of the Eternal Gospel. Towards the end of the twelfth century, and during the early part of the thirteenth, there lived in Calabria a holy Abbot of the Cistercian order, whose name was Joachim.* Placed on the borders of the Greek and the Latin Churches, he discerned with rare foresight the general state of Christendom. All the Latin world acknowledged him as a prophet; a new order, that of Flor, took its name from the place, in the neighbourhood of Cosenza, to which he retired.

The narrow and mistrustful scholastic theology, under which all germs of good then existing were soon to wither, was not yet all-powerful. Joachim's doctrine was not attacked during his lifetime. He was honoured by Popes Lucius III. and Clement III. It was generally admitted that he had received supernatural light and special assistance in explaining the oracles contained in the Scriptures.

Gifted with an ardent imagination, the Cala-

* See his Life in the 'Bollandists,' 'Acta SS. Maii,' vol. vii., p. 93 *et seq.*

brian enthusiast, in his frequent intercourse with the Greek Church, the faithful guardian of ancient discipline, and perhaps also with some branch of the *Catharist* Church, conceived a deep aversion to the organization of the Latin Church, the intrusion of feudalism into sacred things, and the corrupt and worldly manners of the simoniacal magnates of the Church. He already possessed in its entirety the idea which three centuries later was to bring about a religious revolution—I mean the profound difference between the mediæval and the primitive Church. The Bible, and above all the prophetic books, which were his favourite reading, unveiled to him an historical philosophy which without hesitation he applied to the present, and according to which he even pretended to regulate the future. The destinies of the Catholic Church, such as it had become in the course of centuries, appeared to him to be on their decline. The Greek Church, he sometimes said, is Sodom; the Latin Church, Gomorrah.* He seemed to think Christ's doctrine was not final, and that the reign of the Holy Spirit obscurely promised in the Gospel had not yet come.

Such thoughts occurred spontaneously, in divers countries, to minds alive to the troubles of the time. The valiant heretics, disciples of Amauri de Bene, burnt at Champeaux, in December,

* Epistle 'Loquens Dominus Ezechieli,' No. 58 of St. Germain, last leaf, back.

1210, professed exactly the same ideas,* and there is absolutely nothing to lead us to suppose that they were acquainted with Joachim's doctrines.

Joachim seems to have already dreamt that poverty might be a remedy for the corruption of the period. He is said to have predicted the appearance of an order of spiritual men, which would rule from sea to sea and enjoy the vision of the Father; but Joachim only foresaw what, twenty years later, was to be realized by Francis of Assisi. His order of Flor never acquired a great importance, and after his death the grave doubts which were entertained of his orthodoxy prevented a belief in his holiness from prevailing beyond Calabria. The image of this strange monk, surrounded with a halo of mystery, remained, however, deeply imprinted on the memory of his contemporaries. Legend promptly claimed him. Innumerable miracles were ascribed to him; he was reported to have prophesied revolutions in the Church and in empires. Henceforth imagination knew no bounds. Dante formally awarded him a prophet's brevet.† The numerous manuscripts containing the predictions attributed to Joachim constitute even now a curious spectacle. One sees that they have been read with faith and anxiety. The margins are laden with notes:

* *Vide* M. Hauréau's memoir in the *Revue Archéologique*, December, 1864; Fleury, book lxxvi., No. 59.

† 'Paradiso,' xii. 140, 141.

Nota, nota, nota! Nota bene! Nota mirabilem prophetiam! At the bottom of the pages are figures and calculations; the anxious readers endeavoured to endure their terrors, and to ascertain if the important events announced by the book were soon to take place.*

Joachim is generally pointed out as the author of 'The Eternal Gospel.' The Middle Ages, from the middle of the thirteenth century, believed, and modern critics have generally admitted, that the 'Eternal Gospel' was the title of a secret book, whose doctrine it was wickedly sought to substitute for that of Christ's Gospel. But doubts arise on this point, when we see that most contemporary authors only speak of such a book by hearsay, and without ever quoting it textually—when, besides, there are flagrant contradictions in their testimony as to the nature and origin of the book. When we see that undiscoverable volume made the aliment of and pretext for the passions and interests which in the thirteenth century divided the world, we are tempted to place it in the same category with the book of the 'Three Impostors,' which certainly never existed,† looking upon it as one of those chimeras invented by calumny, and always kept in reserve against those whose ruin is desired.

Vide, for instance, the manuscript No. 427 of the old Latin collection.

† See my essay on 'Averroës et Averroïsm,' p. 292 *et seq.* (second edition).

The words 'Eternal Gospel,' used as the name of a school, appear for the first time in the theological world in 1254. It was the moment when the quarrels of the University with the Mendicant Orders and of the Mendicant Orders between themselves were at their height. In the general fray, 'The Eternal Gospel' became a weapon for the various factions. The Dominicans reproached the Franciscans with it, and the Franciscans the disciples of St. Dominic. The University, through Guillaume de St. Amour, attributed it to the Mendicants, and, by a strange retaliation of public opinion, Guillaume de St. Amour himself passed as its author.*

We are, in many respects, better able than contemporaries to unravel these confusions. 'The Eternal Gospel' was certainly not the production of the Dominicans or the University; it emanated from that dissident faction of St. Francis's congregation, which, in the midst of the general degeneracy of the Order, preserved the spirit of the founder, and continued to believe, throughout the thirteenth century and part of the fourteenth, that the seraphic rule contained the principle which would regenerate mankind, a second gospel superior to the first by its perfection and the duration assured to it. On this point no doubt is possible;

* See M. Daunou's article on Jean de Parme, in vol. xx. of the 'Histoire littéraire de la France,' p. 23 *et seq.*; and the notes to the articles on Guillaume de St. Amour and Gerard d'Abbeville in vol. xxi., p. 458 *et seq.*

but what uncertainties there are in all other respects! Did a work entitled 'The Eternal Gospel' ever really exist? If so, who was its author? Is the whole or part of the work still extant? Is there any hope of ever finding it? Such are the questions whose solution I am about to attempt by means of certain documents, either unpublished, or from which criticism has not yet derived all the information obtainable. In any case, Joachim's writings having been the pretext for and furnished the matter of 'The Eternal Gospel,' a critical discussion of their authenticity should precede all investigations concerning that subject. Such a work having never before found place in any publication relating to literary or ecclesiastical history, I am here obliged to attempt it.

II.

DISCUSSION ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE WORKS OF JOACHIM DI FLOR.

In a letter, in the form of a will, and dated 1200,* Joachim, minutely detailing the state of his writings at that time, mentions three works as

* It may be read at the beginning of the editions of 'The Concordance between the Two Testaments' (Venice, 1519) and of 'The Commentary on the Apocalypse' (Venice, 1527), or in D'Argentre's 'Collectio Judiciorum,' i., p. 121, or in the 'Bollandists,' *loc. cit.*, p. 104. M. Preger believes this letter to have been fabricated towards the middle of the thirteenth century, together with Joachim's apocryphal writings. But the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) seems to have had it in view (Labbe, Conc. XI., part i., col. 148).

completed, the 'Concordance of the Old and New Testaments,' the 'Commentary on the Apocalypse,' and the 'Decachord Psalter,' without speaking, he adds, of a few pamphlets against the Jews and the adversaries of the Catholic faith.

These three writings are the only important works attributed to Joachim whose authenticity is well established. According to the most probable opinion, he died on the 30th of March, 1202; at any rate, his life did not extend long after 1200. It is difficult to believe that, during his two or three last years, he should have composed the other works attributed to him, which are more voluminous than the productions of the whole of his previous life. Luke, afterwards Archbishop of Cosenza, who was his secretary, only mentions those three works.* Guillaume de Saint-Amour, combating his errors, does not refer to any other writings.† The Cardinals who condemned his doctrine at Anagni only cite one letter besides those three productions.‡ Florent, Bishop of Saint Jean d'Acre, who played the part of promoter in this affair, only alleges the three great works. Guillaume d'Auvergne only mentions the 'Commentary on the Apocalypse' and the 'Concordance.'§ Finally, we will shortly

* 'Acta SS.,' *loc. cit.*, p. 93.

† In Martène and Ducand's 'Amplissima Collectio,' vol. ix., col. 1323. See 'Histoire Littéraire de la France,' vol. xxi., p. 474.

‡ *Vide* farther on, p. 270 *et seq.*

§ 'De Virtutibus,' c. xi., p. 152 (Paris, 1674).

show that the other books ascribed to the holy Abbot show internal evidence of being suppositious.

The three authentic works above mentioned were printed several times, and are to be found in a great number of manuscripts. We need not describe them. It is only necessary to say that the editing was done very carelessly, and that, therefore, notes and comments, not by Joachim, may have crept into the text. It must also be noted that the six books of the 'Commentary on the Apocalypse' are preceded by a 'Liber Introductorius in Expositionem Apocalypsis,' often represented as a separate work under the title of 'Enchiridion' or 'Apocalypsis Nova.'*

The pamphlet against the Jews, spoken of in Joachim's will, appears to be found in one of the Dresden manuscripts,† and to be connected with the 'Concordance.' It seems, however, that two letters should be added to Joachim's genuine works:

(1) An unpublished letter addressed to the faithful, and beginning with these words: 'Loquens Domini Ezechieli Prophetæ;' it is to be met with

* Sorbonne MS., No. 1726, fol. 92 back, lines 27, 28; fol. 103, lines 2, 3. This same work, in No. 427 of the old Latin collection, is called, I know not why, 'Liber de Diversitate Mysteriorum Dei.' *Vide* De Visch's 'Bibl. Cisterc.,' p. 172.

† 'Katalog der Handschriften der Bibl. zu Dresden,' vol. i., p. 57; De Visch's 'Biblioth. Cisterciensis,' p. 172; Trithème, No. 389.

in the MSS. 3595 of the old collection, fol. 19, at the back; St. Germain, 58, last page, at the back; Sorbonne, 1726, fol. 59.

(2) A letter, 'De articulis fidei, ad quemdam filium suum Joannem,' doubtless identical with a treatise 'De articulis fidei' mentioned in the earliest lists of Joachim's writings.* This work is only known by an extract to be found in the reports of the Anagni Commission which condemned the 'Eternal Gospel' in 1225, and of which we shall shortly speak.† Joachim advises his disciple to keep the book carefully concealed, so as to avoid the suspicions of pseudo-zealots, always

* 'Joachim Abbatis et Florensis ordinis Chronologia' (Cosenza, 1612), p. 92. 'Acta SS. Maii,' vol. vii., pp. 103, 105. The Bollandists give us only improbable conjectures about this work.

† It reads as follows (Sorbonne MS., 1725, fol. 104 back): 'Idem habetur apertius in libello ipsius Joachim, "De articulis fidei," descripto ad quemdam filium suum Johannem, quod opus suspectum est ex ipso prologo, ubi sic incipit dicens: "Rogasti me attentius, fili Johannes, ut tibi compilatos traderem articulos fidei, et notarem illa quæ occurrerent Scripturarum loca, in quibus solent simplices frequenter errare. Ecce in subjecta pagina invenies quod petisti. Tene apud te, et lege sub silentio, observans ne perveniat ad manus eorum qui rapiunt verba de convallibus, et currunt cum clamore, ut vocentur ab hominibus Rabbi, habentes quidem speciem pietatis, virtutem autem ejus penitus abnegantes." Ecce qualiter in hoc prologo vult iste Joachim articulos fidei legi in abscondito, more hæreticorum qui in conventiculis dogmatizant. Item inhibet ne tractatus suus veniat ad manus magistrorum, quos etiam tam impudenter quam superbe vituperat.'

in quest of pretexts for scandal. The esoteric and secret character which Joachim was anxious to secure for this production fully explains the scarcity of copies. In it, perhaps, he maintained those doctrines respecting the Trinity opposed to Peter Lombard's, which brought upon him the condemnation of the fourth Lateran Council.* The Anagni reports also contain two more fragments of the same work, the one extracted from the first chapter, entitled 'De fide Trinitatis,' the other from the last, headed 'Confessio fidei ejus, id est Joachim' (fol. 185); but these extracts only contain theological quibbles of hardly any critical interest.

We may perhaps also attribute to Joachim two hymns on Paradise, the one in sapphic, the other in trochaic verse, which are found in the editions of his works after the 'Decachord Psalter.' The second of these compositions, purporting to be the relation of a journey through the supernatural world of spirits, is curious as having preceded the 'Divine Comedy.'†

* The Council seems, however, to refer to a distinct treatise: 'Libellum sive Tractatum quem Abbas Joachim edidit contra Magistrum Petrum Lombardum, de unitate seu essentia Trinitatis,' Labbe, 'Conc.,' vol. xi., part 1, pp. 144 *et seq.*, 240; D'Argentré, 'Coll. Jud.,' i., pp. 120, 121. *Vide* De Visch, 'Bibl. Cisterc.,' p. 173; Trithème, 'De Script. Eccl.,' No. 389; De Lauro, in 'De Riso,' pp. 150, 151.

† Neither M. Ozanam, nor Labitte, nor Mr. Thomas Wright, I believe, make any mention of this hymn in their works on Dante's trilogy.

We will now enter upon the discussion of the works ascribed to Joachim, but whose authorship criticism may or must dispute.*

The most important is the 'Commentary on Jeremiah,'† supposed to be dedicated to the Emperor Henry VI., and printed several times at Venice. Its character is strikingly different from that of Joachim's authentic works. Whenever Joachim wishes to prophesy, he does so with self-control and reserve. He never names anyone: events are scarcely indicated; the amplitude of biblical style enables him to make use of those vague phrases which become prophetic when events permit, without compromising their author when facts turn out differently. The 'Commentary on Jeremiah' is precise in the extreme. The allusions to the events of the thirteenth century are obvious. Frederick II., who was only two years of age at the time when Joachim would

* De Lauro, Trithème, and De Visch make some remarks; but they are too vague to bear discussion.

† Subsequently to the first composition of this work, there appeared in the 'Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie' of M. Hilgenfeld (second year, Jena, 1859), a memoir of M. Karl Friedrich relative to that commentary, and the 'Commentary on Isaiah,' also attributed to Joachim. As regards the question of authenticity, M. Friedrich arrived at the same result as we did. M. Völter accepts that thesis as proved. — 'Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte' of Brieger (fourth year, Gotha, 1880), p. 367 *et seq.* Without being acquainted with either M. Friedrich's researches or mine, M. J. A. Schneider came to similar conclusions ('Joachim von Floris,' p. 27 *et seq.*).

have written that work, is already designated in it by his enemies' usual metaphors, *vipera, regulus.* His reign is denounced as that of a tyrant, hostile to the Church, the destroyer of its privileges, the persecutor of its ministers, a new Evilmerodach who sits in the temple and is worshipped as a god.

'In his youth,' says the prophet, 'he shall appear kind and amiable, he shall be nurtured by the Spouse of the Lamb; but in after time, he, like another Belshazzar, shall only follow the impulse of his passions, and, with women, shall desecrate the sacred vessels of God's temple. But if you ask me what shall be his end, listen to Isaiah, who will teach you. A superhuman sword shall smite him, a sword which is no other but that of God's Word shall exterminate him, that you may know that God does not need the hands of men to drag this monster from his lair.'

The Guelf of the thirteenth century betrays himself in the following curious words:

'The Lord shall unsheath His sword, for the German rule has ever been harsh and cruel to us. Therefore it is necessary that the Lord shall strike it with the sword of His fury, that all kings may tremble at the crash of its fall.'[o]

And in another passage:

'The army of the Chaldeans fighting against Jerusalem and Juda, with the exception of Lachis and Azecha, represents the Germans and other persecutors armed against the Roman Church and the Latin cities of Italy, excepting those

[o] Fol. 46 and 62 (Venice, 1525). This edition seems abridged in some passages. The text quoted by Don Gervaise ('Histoire de l'Abbé Joachim,' p. 35 *et seq.*) is more complete.

which are strong in their peoples or know how to seek protection within their walls.° The schism between the Church and the Empire begun by the Normans shall be consummated by the Germans, in whose invading tide shall be drowned the freedom of the pontiffs—in such a manner that the Empire, which served at first to raise and protect the Church, will, in the end, bring about its ruin.'†

'The tendency of the Chaldean rule is annihilation,' says he again. 'The eagle shall come, ferocious as the leopard, sly as the fox, terrible as the lion, as says the Erythræan Sybil. Under the pretence of putting down the *Patarins*, he shall treacherously march against the Church, and, despite the resistance of Italy, despite the anathemas of the Church, he shall satisfy his rage. What dreadful evils shall then weigh down Liguria and Italy! It will be easier to feel than to describe them. Under the united efforts of the Franks and the Germans, all the Roman nobility shall perish; the pontiff shall be banished, the monasteries pulled down, Christian worship effaced from the earth.'

France does not excite less apprehensions in the ultramontane prophet:

'Let the Church be on her guard! The alliance of France is like a reed that pierces the hand which leans on it.'‡

Those most disposed to accord the gift of prophecy to Joachim will doubtless find it difficult

° 'Exceptis illis quæ vel fortes populariter sunt, vel quæ esse appetunt in suis munitionibus singulares.'

† Fol. 58 back. Compare 53 back.

‡ 'Videat generalis ecclesia si non fiet ei baculus arundineus potentia gallicana, cui siquidem si quis nititur perforat manum suam.' Cf. Isaiah xxvi. 6. *Vide* the chronicle 'De Rebus in Italia Gestis,' published by M. Huillard-Breolles, p. 257; cf. *ibid.*, p. xxxvi. *Vide* also M. Waitz's extracts in Pertz, 'Archives,' vol. xi., third and fourth fascicules, pp. 511, 512 (1855).

to admit that he could have shared so thoroughly in the passions of a century of which he only saw the early years. A last proof may, if needed, suffice to establish our point. The work we speak of is dedicated to Henry VI., who died in 1197; it must, therefore, have been composed before that date; but, in the list of his writings, drawn up in 1200, Joachim makes no mention of the 'Commentary on Jeremiah.'

This work must, therefore, be considered as the production of the school founded by the Order of St. Francis, which, as we shall presently see, endeavoured towards the middle of the thirteenth century to avail itself of Joachim's name to ensure the triumph of its doctrines. The ideas of the Franciscan Joachimites are met with on every page. According to the theories of that school, the year 1260 is pointed out as the term of the great tribulation which will close the reign of Christ and open that of the Holy Ghost.* Allusions to the two great mendicant Orders whose institution was said to have been predicted by Joachim frequently occur. And, as though the party which ascribed its opinions to Joachim feared that thoughts expressed so enigmatically would not attain the proposed end, some adherents of that party took care to explain all obscure passages in a pamphlet preserved in No. 836 of Saint Germain, under the heading of 'Verba quædam de dictis Joachim abbatis explanativa

* Fol. 45 back, 58 back, 62.

super Jeremiam.' There, every anathema is addressed in full, and to every threat is affixed a proper name.

Our demonstration will be complete when we see what an important place is held by these apocryphal productions in the school of the 'Eternal Gospel.' The recently published* 'Chronicle' of Fra Salimbene, a Franciscan friar of the thirteenth century, furnishes us with new light on the subject. In it, Joachim's 'Commentary on Jeremiah' is often quoted. Salimbene became acquainted with it for the first time in 1248.† The irreconcilable feud between Frederic II. and the Italian and Pontifical party having begun about 1239, the date of the drawing up of the 'Commentary on Jeremiah' is brought within sufficiently narrow limits.‡

Commentaries on Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the lesser prophets were several times printed at Venice, and are to be found in some manuscripts§

* Parma, 1857. † Pp. 102, 122, 176, 389.

‡ The movement of Hall in Suabia (Fleury, lxxxiii.3) and the 'Epistola fratris Arnoldi, ordinis prædicatorum, de correctione ecclesiæ,' published by Winkelmann (Berlin, 1865), offer the German, Ghibelline, and Dominican counterpart of the same movement. See M. Völter's memoir in the 'Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte' of Brieger, vol. iv., 1880, p. 360 *et seq.*

§ *Vide* C. de Visch, 'Bibli. Cisterc.,' pp. 172, 173; 'Bollandists,' 'Acta SS. Maii,' vol. vii., pp. 103, 105; Fabricius, 'Bibl. Med. et Inf. Latin,' vol. iv., pp. 40, 41; J. Wolf, 'Lectionum Memorabilium et Reconditarum Centenarii XVI.,' vol. i., p. 488 *et seq.*

under Joachim's name. These productions are open to the same objections as the 'Commentary on Jeremiah.' It is hardly credible that in two or three years Joachim could have composed so much. Anachronisms and traces of conjecture are frequently met with in them.

The 'De Oneribus Provinciarum,' given as a distinct work in No. 836 of St. Germain, and in some other MSS.,* is an extract from the 'Commentary on Isaiah.' The author classes in provinces all the cities of the world of which he knows the names, and pronounces on each a prophetic word. Apart from the geographical interest of such a production, it contains much historical information respecting the events of the first half of the thirteenth century. Its author seems to have been influenced by the same antipathies as the commentator on Jeremiah. Hatred of the House of Hohenstaufen breaks out incessantly. Sicily is the hot-bed of tyranny and error—*alumpna tyrannidis et erroris;* Calabria is the cavern of wrens, the hole of vipers.† Umbria and Spain shall see rise, like two stars, two orders clad in sackcloth and haircloth, whose mission will be to preach the Gospel of the kingdom.

* De Visch, p. 173; De Riso (pp. 122, 153), though wrongly, admits it as such.

† Fol. 83 back, 84.

These are names given to the Albigenses and other sects of the eleventh and twelfth centuries who used to inveigh against the immorality and simony of the clergy.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

The devil shall stir up against them a ferocious beast,—the sect of the Patarins.*

In the same category are to be classed the commentaries on the prophecies of Merlin and of the Erythræan Sybil, also dedicated to Henry VI.,† and attributed to Joachim. They may be read in No. 3319 of the old collection, and in part in No. 865 of the St. Victor MSS.‡ These texts, not quite uniform, used to be cut up according to the fancy of compilers, and it is very difficult to ascertain their identity. Thus, No. 3319 contains in succession two different versions of the Commentary. It is remarkable that Merlin and the Erythræan Sybil should be frequently quoted in the 'Commentary on Jeremiah.' Here again

* Fol. 80 v. I will here quote some other passages on the Patarins: 'Hæresis Patarena in Lombardiæ terminis invalescens adeo suos circumquaque stimulos pravitatis extendit ut non minus sit infesta Catholicis quam olim prophetis Domini fuit Athalia filia Jezabelis, etc. . . . Lombardorum gens impia . . . Deo detestabilis . . . qui quæ de fumo putei, doctrina scilicet seculari, hæreticos imbuit et aerem ecclesiasticæ puritatis infecit, æternæ rhomphæam ultionis necesse est ut non evadat . . . Verona nutrix hæresis dirum deflebit excidium filiorum' (fol. 81 back, 82). 'Ut si campus tribulis et urticis, scilicet Patarenis, Gazaris et aliis schismaticis in Tolosa, Livonia (*sic*), et Ausonia, et Liguria diversisque partibus per Italiam occupetur, quum de fumo erroris eorum partes etiam remotissimæ denigrantur' (fol. 95 back).

† De Visch, pp. 172, 173; De Lauro in De Riso, p. 151.

‡ Perhaps in the Joachimite MS. of St. Omer. *Vide* supplement to the catalogue of that library by M. Theodore Duchet. *Revue critique*, Nov. 15, 1873, pp. 323, 324.

Franciscan ideas break forth at every line. Fra Salimbene knew all these apocryphal prophecies, and contrasts them with the 'Commentary on Jeremiah.'*

The 'De Oneribus Prophetarum' is a commentary supposed to have been addressed to Henry VI. on certain chapters of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zachariah, and Malachi. It is met with in the MSS. 3593 of the old collection, 836 of St. Germain, and 865 of St. Victor (incomplete), and also in the St. Omer MS., No. 278.† It was printed at Venice in 1519. It was evidently a device of the forgers to dedicate all these apocryphal productions to Henry VI. in order to give them a genuine appearance. We may add that the dedicatory epistles are so unbecoming and so full of threats that their tone would alone be sufficient to show that they are forgeries.‡

In the St. Germain MS., No. 58 (last page but one), and 3595 of the old collection, fol. 22, there is, subjoined to other works of Joachim, a pamphlet without either title or author's name, under the form of a synoptical table, and beginning with these words: 'Helyas jam venit, et non cognoverunt eum.' It is the key to all Joachim's philosophy of history, symbolically connected with the opening of the seven seals of the Apocalypse. Fra Salimbene refers to it under the title of

* Pp. 175, 176; cf. p. 106 *et seq.*

† De Visch, p. 173; Duchet, *loc. cit.*

‡ Compare Salimbene, p. 4.

'Book of Images.'* It gives the year 1260 as the end of the New Testament. Then shall appear Elias, and the Roman Church, destroyed by the emperor, shall be re-established. The last pope mentioned in this pamphlet is Innocent III., who reigned from 1198 to 1216. The author does not seem to employ any other artifice to pass himself off as Joachim.

Fra Salimbene declares he received, at Hyères, from the great Joachimite Hugues de Digne, a commentary by Joachim on the four gospels, which he copied at Aix for John of Parma.† This work is to be found in one of the Dresden manuscripts.‡ It is certainly an apochryphal production.

Ch. de Visch§ mentions the existence of one of Joachim's writings entitled 'De Seminibus Scripturarum' in a Cistercian convent, near Saragossa. The learned M. Theodore Duchet met with this work in No. 278 of the St. Omer library.‖ Its real title is 'De Semine Scripturarum.' I would advise some young inquirer to

* Pp. 85, 124, 224.

† Pp. 124, 125.

‡ 'Katalog der Handschr. der Bibl. zu Dresden,' i., p. 57 (Leipz., 1882). *Vide* also 'Acta SS.' volume already quoted, p. 103; De Visch, 'Bibl. Cisterc.,' p. 172; Trithème No. 389; De Lauro in De Riso, p. 151. The 'De septem sigillis' (De Visch and Trithème, *loc. cit.*) seems to be an extract from it ('Katalog,' *loc cit.*).

§ *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

‖ *Vide Revue critique*, Nov. 15, 1873, p. 323.

examine this manuscript, and ascertain its character, and also its degree of authenticity. The Saragossa manuscript contained, it seems, a Joachimite commentary on the 'Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs,' with which the Latins only became acquainted through the translation of Robert of Lincoln, made about 1242.

The important Dresden manuscript, A, 121, contains (p. 235 *et seq.*) two other Joachimite pamphlets,* whose detailed examination might also prove of some use.

The 'Commentary on the Prophecies of Cyrillus,' printed at Venice in 1517, several manuscripts of which are still in existence, is evidently an apocryphal work. The prophecies on the popes, attributed to Joachim, which in the Middle Ages enjoyed such great popularity, still less deserve to be discussed. When once the Abbot of Flor was called a prophet, his name was made a shelter by many whose political enthusiasm induced them to foretell the future. One feeling seems to inspire all the authors of these singular compositions, and imparts great unity to the apocryphal works of Joachim: this is hatred of the Court of Rome, which is identified with the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse; of the pope, who is identified with Anti-christ; of the emperor, who is represented as the oppressor of Italy. All these works evidently come from the hands of a sect governed by the thought of thorough reform and of open

* Katalog der Handschr. der Bibl. zu Dresden, i., p. 57.

revolt against the Church. For the present, it suffices us to have established that the responsibility of those fantastic productions cannot rest upon the Abbot of Flor, and to have proved that three great works, viz., 'The Concordance of the two Testaments,' 'The Commentary on the Apocalypse,' 'The Psalterion Decachordon,' and a few letters and treatises of secondary importance, alone deserve to bear Joachim's name.

III.

THE EXALTED FRANCISCAN SCHOOL.—JOHN OF PARMA.

The inquiry we have just made into the writings of the Calabrian prophet has proved that none of the genuine or apocryphal works which appear under his name bear the title of 'Eternal Gospel.' The supposition (shared by such scholars as Tillemont, Crevier, and others) that Joachim did compose a work of that name, proceeds from a confusion which we will presently explain. It even appears that Joachim never very clearly avowed the seditious ideas subsequently attributed to him. The fourth Lateran Council (1215), though condemning the opposition he made to Peter Lombard on a point of metaphysics, acknowledged his submission to the Church and his perfect docility.

Joachim would have been remembered only as

a second-rate theologian and a bold exegetic, had not chance brought his name into prominence and associated it with one of the most daring attempts recorded in the history of Christian reformers.

No one has yet pointed out all the historical significance of the Order of St. Francis. The historians of the religious orders have mainly concerned themselves with it as a monastic institution; men of taste and imagination have been chiefly interested in the wonderful outburst of poetry which it produced; and thus the political and social aspirations concealed under what was apparently a purely ascetic movement have not been fully appreciated. The fact is, such hopes had never been conceived since the earliest days of Christianity. The 'Conformities,' by Bartholomew of Pisa, is not an isolated production; it is the tardy manifesto of the secret thoughts of the Order. St. Francis's aim was not to add a new rule to the already long list of monastic rules; it was to realize the Christian ideal, to show what could be done by carrying out the Sermon on the Mount to the letter as a law of life. At the root of the Franciscan attempt there lay the hope of a general reform of the world, of a restoration of the Gospel. It was admitted that, for twelve hundred years, the Gospel had not been acted upon; that the essential precept of Jesus, renunciation of earthly goods, had not been understood; that, after centuries of widowhood, Poverty had at last

found a spouse.* Was not this to confess that the birth of Francis of Assisi had opened a new era for Christianity and for mankind ?†

These audacious pretensions, controlled in the founder by great mystical tenderness and perfect tact, unveiled themselves only by degrees; but the idea that holiness consisted solely in the renunciation of property inevitably bore its fruit. When it was asserted that man had a right to seek for higher perfection than that to be found in the Church, was not this as much as to say that the Church must come to an end in order to make way for the society which taught that new perfection? Even during the lifetime of the founder, but especially at the first chapter held after his death, two parties showed themselves in the Order; the one, incapable of carrying out the superhuman undertaking dreamed of by the sublime mendicant, and wiser according to the flesh than the spirit of the seraphic institute allowed, thought that the primitive rigour of the rule was beyond human strength, that the rule might in certain respects be made milder, and that the Pope should grant dispensations accordingly. The other side maintained, with surprising courage, that St. Francis's work had not yet borne all its fruits, that that work was superior to the Pope and to the Church of Rome, that the rule was a revelation dependent on God alone. At the bottom of their heart lay the

* Dante, 'Paradiso,' xi. 58 *et seq.*

† *Vide* 'Fioretti,' chap. xvi., near the end.

unavowed belief that the appearance of St. Francis was neither more nor less than the advent of a second Christ, as great as the first—greater, even, because of his poverty. Hence that strange legend in which the Seraph of Assisi, equal to Christ in all other things, is placed above him, because he never possessed anything of his own—not even those things which are consumed by use. And hence the openly avowed pretension that the Order of St. Francis was destined to absorb all other Orders, to supplant the universal Church itself, and to become the final form of human society on the eve of its disappearance.

These lofty ideas, restrained by the common sense and also by the worldly spirit of the majority, were the secret of a small number when the appointment of John Borelli, or Buralli, to the dignity of General of the Order, in 1247, twenty-one years after the death of the patriarch of Assisi, brought about a tumult and gave the new doctrine a definite name. John Buralli, born at Parma about 1209, was the most decided representative of the party which, anxious for the literal realization of the revelations of Monte Alverno, did not recoil before the most exaggerated social applications of the principle of poverty. He rejected all interpretations of the rule, even those which had been proposed by doctors and sanctioned by popes. Persuaded that the future of the Church and of mankind were bound up in the institution of St. Francis, he conceived the project of reviving the

ideas of the founder, which the weakness of his disciples had allowed to fall into oblivion. The beginning of his term of office was a return to the Franciscan ideal in all its purity. The rule was again enforced in every detail. That which occurs at the outset of all religions had come to pass in the Order of Assisi. The true disciples of the founder, the saints, the ascetics, had soon become inconvenient; in the years following Francis's death, the heirs of his spirit had nearly all been exiled or imprisoned; one or two were even assassinated. John of Parma recalled the banished saints. The legend of Francis was taken up and embellished.* A will, exceeding in strictness even the prescriptions of the rule, was supposed to have been dictated by Francis when stigmatized. By his lofty piety, his contempt for earthly grandeurs, his dislike to the worldly splendours of ecclesiastical dignities, John of Parma was, for a time, to the zealots of the Order, the living image of their sainted founder. In the nine years of his rule a pious coterie flourished, which we know marvellously well through the memoirs of the frank and amiable Frà Salimbene, one of its members.† Joachim was, next to Francis, the oracle of this small school. His writings used to be eagerly read and copied. The Abbot of Flor, who had only left unknown disciples in

* The compilation of the narrative of the 'Three Companions' dates from the year 1247.

† See chiefly pp. 98 *et seq.*; 101 *et seq.*; 104, 317, *et seq.*

Calabria, thus found in a different Order a devoted family and ardent followers.

Here we certainly have the origin of the 'Eternal Gospel.' Already, in the fourteenth century, the Dominican Nicolas Eymeric, in his 'Directorium Inquisitorum,' refers to John of Parma as its author, and this has remained the opinion of nearly all ecclesiastical critics and historians. The efforts made by the authors of the literary history of the Franciscans, Wadding and Sbaraglia, in order to remove the blot of heresy from a Superior of their Order, have failed to obscure a truth which is demonstrably certain.* Yet a great number of questions remain to be solved. Does the 'Eternal Gospel' exist in any collection of manuscripts? What was its nature? In drawing up the work, what were the respective shares of the master and of his disciple Gérard de Borgo San-Dormino, who, according to Frà Salimbene, was its sole author? Here it is that manuscript documents afford much light. We hope to show that fragments of the 'Eternal Gospel' and the documents relating to the trial connected with it have safely come down to us.

IV.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS WHICH THROW LIGHT ON THE QUESTION OF THE 'ETERNAL GOSPEL.'

These documents are preserved in two MSS. from the library of the old Sorbonne, now in the

* *Vide* M. Daunou's article previously quoted.

Bibliothèque Nationale (Sorbonne collection, Nos. 1726, fourteenth century; 1706, fifteenth century), and in another manuscript which formerly belonged to the College of Navarre, now in the collection of the Bibliothèque Mazarine (No. 391, fifteenth century). These manuscripts have not been wholly unknown to critics. Quétif and Echard, two learned Dominicans who applied themselves to making a careful abstract of the Sorbonne MSS., quoted, though incidentally, a passage taken from No. 1726, with regard to Hugues de St. Cher.* M. Daunou was acquainted with the fragment mentioned by Quétif and Echard, and made use of it in his excellent work on John of Parma; but he did not refer to the original manuscript. M. Victor le Clerc saw at once the importance of the documents contained in that manuscript, and the account to which they could be turned. No. 1706, much less complete than No. 1726, was employed by the Bishop of Tulle, Du Plessis d'Argentré, for his great compilation, 'Collectio Judiciorum de Novis Erroribus' (vol. i., Paris, 1724). M. Hauréau took it up and examined it. As for the manuscript now deposited in the Bibliothèque Mazarine, it was pointed out to me by the learned M. Taranne, who had described it in view of a catalogue of the manuscripts of the said library begun by him.†

* 'Script. ord. Præd.,' vol. i., p. 202.

† Among the extracts from the MSS. of Rome, by La Porte du Theil, which are in the MS. department of the Bibliothèque

The extracts relative to the 'Everlasting Gospel' contained in these three manuscripts are four in number.

1. In No. 1726 of the Sorbonne, and only in that manuscript,* is to be found a writing whose title runs as follows: *Exceptiones librorum viri eruditissimi venerabilis Joachim, primi Florentium abbatis, de pressuris seculi et mundi fine et signis et terroribus et ærumnis, seu etiam de pseudo-christis et pseudo-prophetis, quorum plura scripta sunt in divinis sermonibus, sed idcirco non omnibus clara. Quia multis sunt nodis perplexa et occultis mysteriis quæ omnia spiritualiter intellecta ostendunt nobis multa quæ futura sunt novissimis diebus, laboriosos*

Nationale (vol. vii., p. 323; vol. xviii., p. 56), is one which professes to come from No. 4380 of Queen Christina, headed: 'Articuli cujusdam libri, Parisiis combusti, qui dicebatur Evangelium sempiternum. Incipit, Sequuntur articuli quadraginta.' I dare not identify this piece with certainty. I recommend it to young students of the 'Ecole de Rome.'

* The Sorbonne MS., 1726, is composed of a collection of fragments, each bearing a distinct pagination. The only part of interest to us comprises 106 pages. The last page bears the following notes written by different hands: 'Errores qui continentur in Introductorio in Evangelium eternum, et in libro Concordiarum Joachim;' then: 'In hoc volumine continentur extractiones librorum Joachim, et extractiones de Evangelio eterno, et reprobationes eorumdem.—Quod volumen est pauperum magistrorum de Sorbona, ex legato magistri Petri de Lemovicis, quondam socii domus hujus.—Pretii 20 solidorum.—39^{us} inter originalia mixta sanctorum.—Residuum require in papiro post librum de gradibus electorum.—Chatenabitur.'

scilicet rerum fines et, post multos et magnos agones et certamina, pacem victoribus impertiri.

The work goes on in this strain for seventy-eight pages, and terminates abruptly, without *explicit* or conclusion. It is an extract from Joachim's authentic or apocryphal works, without any commentary by the compiler.* The purpose of this collection is obvious: it was meant to compress within a very small book all Joachim's doctrine. We shall have to examine if the compilation contained in our manuscript may be identified with any of the writings which played a part in the affair of 1254.

2. The second document found in the three

* The works thus abridged are seven in number. 1°. From fol. 1 to fol. 38 back, there are extracts from the book of the 'Concordance between the two Testaments.' 2°. From fol. 38 back to fol. 48, there are extracts from the 'Liber introductorius in Apocalypsim,' which, as we saw previously, serves as an introduction to the 'Exposition of the Apocalypse' by Joachim. 3°. From fol. 48 to fol. 49, extracts from the 'Psalterion Decachordon.' 4°. From fol. 49 to fol. 59, extracts from the 'Commentary on Jeremiah,' attributed to Joachim. 5°. From fol. 59 to fol. 63 back, Joachim's letter referred to above, and beginning with 'Loquens Dominus Ezechieli.' It is unfinished, and followed by a small French fragment by a different hand: 'C'est que len dit es profecies de Joachim escrit ou grant liure de Concordances: an lan de grace mil et CC et IIIIxx et V serunt batallies es pleins de Nerbone de quatre rois esqueles morront,' etc. A lacuna, then, from fol. 65 to fol. 76, extracts from the 'De oneribus prophetarum,' attributed to Joachim. 7°. From fol. 76 to fol. 78 back, extracts from the 'Commentary on Ezekiel,' also attributed to Joachim.

manuscripts before mentioned is an extract from the heterodox propositions discovered in the book entitled 'Introductorium in Evangelium æternum' by the commission of cardinals appointed by Pope Alexander IV., in 1255, to examine the said work. Du Plessis d'Argentré published this document from the manuscript 1706 of the Sorbonne,* which is the least perfect of the three. D'Argentré's edition has lacunæ in many important passages, particularly in the precise references made by the pontifical censors to the text of the 'Introductorium.' Whenever it is necessary, to complete D'Argentré's text, we will give the original in the notes.† To begin with, it is important to point out a passage omitted by the learned Bishop: 'Towards the end of the twelfth chapter we read these words: . . . Until that angel who carried the sign of the living God‡ and appeared about the year 1200 of the incarnation, and whom friar Gérard recognised as no other than St. Francis.'§ This Gérard is assuredly Gérard de Borgo San Don-

* 'Coll. Jud.,' i., p. 193 *et seq.*

† This is the opening which has been curtailed by D'Argentré: 'Hæc notaviimus et extraximus de "Introductorio in Evangelium æternum," misso ad dominum papam ab episcopo Parisiensi, et tradito nobis tribus cardinalibus ad inspiciendum ab eodem domino papa, videlicet O. Tusculanensi, Stephano Prænestino episcopis, et Hugoni Sanctæ Sabinæ presbytero cardinali.'

‡ The stigmata.

§ 'Item in xii. capitulo, versus finem, ponit hæc verba: "Usque ad illum angelum qui habuit signum Dei vivi, qui apparuit circa MCC incarnationis dominicæ, quem angelum frater Gerardus vocat et confitetur sanctum Franciscum."'

nino, whom Salimbene considers to have played the chief part in the affair of the 'Eternal Gospel.'

3. After this enumeration of errors, there follows in the Sorbonne MS., No. 1726 (fol. 91 back), and in the MS. of the 'Bibliothèque Mazarine' (fol. 86 back), an extensive report of one of the sittings of the Anagni Commission. This document not being found in No. 1706 has escaped D'Argentré: it has never been published.

'In the year of our Lord 1255, on the 8th of the ides of July, at Anagni, before us Eudes, Bishop of Tusculum,° and Friar Hughes, cardinal priest,† commissioners appointed by the pope, together with the Reverend Father Stephen,‡ Bishop of Præneste, who has excused himself through his chaplain and has delegated to us his powers in this affair, there appeared Master Florent, Bishop of Acre,§ who submitted to us some passages from Joachim's books which appeared suspicious to him. . . To investigate these passages we have secured the aid of two other persons, viz.: Friar Bouvalet, Bishop of . . .,‖ and Friar Peter, reader of the preaching friars of Anagni, one of whom followed the text of the original books of Joachim di Flor, and ascertained in our presence

° Eudes de Chateauroux, who plays an important part in the life of St. Louis. *Vide* Fleury's 'Histoire ecclesiastique,' books lxxxii., No. 33; lxxxiii., No. 45; lxxxv., No. 7.

† This is the famous Hugues de Saint-Cher.

‡ He was a Hungarian and Archbishop of Strigonia. See Fleury's 'Hist. eccl.,' book lxxxv., No. 7.

§ Florent or Florentin, Bishop of Acre, became afterwards Archbishop of Arles. We shall find him about 1260 again condemning the Joachimites at the Council of Arles. Cf. 'Gallia christiana,' vol. i., p. 569.

‖ The name of the bishopric is doubtful. Can it be the *ecclesia Panidensis* of the 'Oriens christianus,' iii., col. 966-67?

whether the quotations, which the said Bishop of Acre read or caused to be read by our registrar, were really contained in the aforesaid books. He began thus:

'"The fundamental principle of Joachim's doctrine is, first of all, to be noted; it consists in distinguishing three states in the history of the world; this he does in the 4th chapter of the 2nd book, which begins with these words: 'Intelligentia vero illa,' saying: 'Aliud tempus fuit in quo vivebant homines secundum carnem,'" etc.'[o]

What follows is chiefly composed of a series of passages taken from Joachim's genuine works, that is, from the 'Concordance,' from the 'Apocalypsis nova' or 'Liber introductorius in Apoca-

[o] 'Anno Domini M°CC°LV° VIII., idus Julii, Anagniæ, coram nobis, Odone episcopo Tusculano, et fratre Hugone presbytero cardinali, auditoribus et inspectoribus datis a papa, una cum reverendo patre Stephano Prænestino episcopo, se excusante per proprium capellanum suum, et nobis quantum ad hoc vices suas committente, comparuit magister Florentius, episcopus Acconensis, proponens quædam verba de libris Joachim extracta, suspecta sibi, ut dicebat, nec publice, dogmatizanda aut prædicanda, nec in scriptis redigenda, ut fieret inde doctrina sive liber, pro ut sibi videbatur. Et ad hæc audienda et inspicienda vocavimus una nobiscum duos alios, scilicet fratrem Bonevaletum, episcopum Pavendensem, et fratrem Petrum, lectorem fratrum prædicatorum Anagniæ, quorum unus tenebat originalia Joachim de Florensi monasterio, et inspiciebat coram nobis utrum hæc essent in prædictis libris quæ prædictus episcopus Acconensis legebat et legi faciebat per tabellionem nostrum, et incipiebat sic:

'Primo notandum est fundamentum doctrinæ Joachim. Et proposuit tres status totius seculi, IIII. capitulo secundi libri, quod incipit: *Intelligentia vero illa*, etc., dicens: "Aliud tempus fuit in quo vivebant homines secundum carnem, cui initiatio facta est in Adam."' This passage actually occurs in the 'Concordance' (p. 8 of the edition published at Venice in 1519).

lypsim,' and from the 'Decachord Psalter,' with criticisms on the erroneous propositions found in them. At intervals, there are quotations from one of Joachim's commentators named 'Frater Gerardus,'* who is no other than Gérard de Borgo

* I give here the chief passages relating to this important personage :

Fol. 94 of the MS. 1726. 'Quod exponens frater G. scripsit: "Hæc abominatio erit pseudopapa, ut habetur alibi." Et istud "alibi" reperitur longe infra, v. libro Concordiæ de Zacharia propheta, ubi dicitur: "In Evangelio dicitur: 'Quum videritis abominationem desolationis quæ dicta est a Daniele,'" etc. . . Rursus et ibi frater G.: "Hæc abominatio quidam papa erit simoniaca labe respersus, qui circa finem sexti temporis obtinebit in sede, sicut scribit in quodam libello ille qui fuit minister hujus operis."'

Fol. 96 back, after a quotation from the 'Commentary on the Apocalypse,' 'Hucusque verba Joachim et fratris Gerardi.'

Fol. 99. 'Item habetur per notulam fratris Gerardi super principium ejusdem capituli Danielis, ubi dicit sic frater Gerardus: "Hæc tribulatio, quæ erit talis qualis nunquam fuit, debet fieri, ut ex multis locis apparet tam in hoc libro quam in aliis, circa M.CC.LX annum incarnationis dominicæ; post quam revelabitur Antichristus. Hæc tribulatio erit in corporalibus et spiritualibus maxime. Sed tribulatio maxima, quæ statim sequetur interposito tamen cujusdam spatio quantulæcumque pacis, erit magis in spiritualibus; unde erit periculosior quam prima."'

Fol. 100 back. 'Super hoc Gerardus in Glossa: "In hoc mysterio vocat terram scripturam prioris Testamenti, aquam scripturam novi Testamenti, ignem vero scripturam Evangelii æterni."'

Ibid. 'Super hoc glossa fratris Gerardi: "Declaratio est ejus quod dicitur Evangelium æternum in secundo libro Psalterii decem chordarum, scilicet xix. capitulo, quod incipit: *In primo sane tempore.*"'

Fol. 102. 'Notula fratris Gerardi: "In hoc loco vir indutus

San-Donnino, whose name we found before in the above mentioned second document. We will later on draw conclusions from all this.

4. The fourth document exists only in No. 1760 of the Sorbonne. D'Argentré published it from that manuscript with some errors and omissions.* M. Preger edited it from two Munich manuscripts.† It is a new enumeration of the errors contained in the 'Eternal Gospel'—errors identical with those attributed by Nicolas Eymeric to John of Parma;‡ but Nicolas Eymeric contents himself with mentioning the errors without saying where they come from, whereas our manuscript furnishes important indi-

lineis, qui fuit minister hujus operis, loquitur de se et de duobus qui secuti sunt eum statim post M.CCum annum incarnationis dominicæ; quos Daniel dicit se vidisse super ripam fluminis; quorum unus dicitur in Apocalypsi Angelus habens falcem acutam, et alius dicitur Angelus qui habuit signum Dei vivi, per quem Deus renovabit apostolicam vitam." Idem ibidem, super illud verbum *Evangelium regni*, dicit similiter Gerardus in notula: "Evangelium regni vocat Evangelium spirituale, quod beatus Joachim vocat Evangelium æternum, quod in adventu Helyæ prædicari oportet omnibus gentibus, et tunc veniet consummatio."'

Fol. 102 back. 'Dicit frater Gerardus in notula: "Iste doctor sive angelus apparuit circa M.CC. annum incarnationis dominicæ, hoc est ille liber de quo loquitur hic, in quo vii. tonitrua locuta sunt voces suas, quæ sunt mysteria vii. signaculorum.'

* 'Coll. Jud.,' i., d. 164 and fol.

† 'Abhandlungen' of the Munich Academy, vol. xii., 3rd part, p. 33 and fol.

‡ 'Direct. Inq.,' p. 188-89 (Romæ, 1578).

cations on that point. Usserius and Meyenberg* reproduced, from the chronicle of Henry of Hertford, a text resembling that of our manuscript, much less correct in general, though more complete towards the end. Indeed, instead of concluding, like D'Argentré's text, with the errors taken from the fourth book of the second part, Meyenberg's text, in accordance with that of M. Préger, distinguishes two treatises in that fourth book,† and gives the errors of both; it then takes up the fifth book, in which he points out five treatises: one, 'De septem diebus;' another, 'De Jobo;' a third, 'De Joseph et pincerna cui somnium, apparuit;' a fourth, 'De tribus generibus hominum, videlicet Israeliticis, Ægyptiacis, Babyloniis;' a fifth, 'De historia Judith.' Towards the end, in the Munich MSS., we read this curious annotation: 'Ex hiis autem quæ dicuntur ibi in expositione hystoriæ de David potest intelligi quod ille qui composuit opus quod dicitur Evangelium æternum non fuit Joachim, sed aliquis vel aliqui moderni temporis, quoniam facit ibi mentionem de Frederico imperatore, persecutore romanæ ecclesiæ.'‡

* 'De pseudo Evangelio æterno' (præside J. A. Schmidt), p. 11 and fol. (Helmstadt, 1725).

† Instead of 'De quarto libro hujus duo errores extrahi possunt' (D'Argentré), we must read: 'De quarto libro hujus partis, in primo tractatu, duo errores extrahi possunt.'

‡ Preger, work quoted above, p. 36.

V.

THE BOOK OF THE 'ETERNAL GOSPEL.'

Having indicated the texts on which I intend to base my argument, I must now draw the conclusions. What are we to think of the book entitled the 'Eternal Gospel'? Was it distinct from the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel'? Is this last-named work still extant? Is Gérard's work, mentioned in the Anagni trial, identical with the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel'? What was the relation existing between these works and the genuine productions of Abbot Joachim? What is the date of their composition?

We must not be surprised at the difficulties offered by questions apparently so simple. No historical questions are more difficult to solve, than those which aim at discovering in the past qualities created by the spirit of the present. The scruples of exact bibliography were all but unknown in the Middle Ages. The rigorous individuality of a book is a recent idea. Printing itself, which was to bring about such a thorough change in that respect, modified but slowly the public modes of thought.

The form and composition of the 'Eternal Gospel' are clearly revealed to us by the report of the Cardinals of Anagni (the second of the before-mentioned documents). It is there said

expressly* that the 'Eternal Gospel' was divided into three parts, and formed by the combination of the three authentic works of Abbot Joachim,—the 'Concordance of both Testaments' being the first book, the 'New Apocalypse'† the second, and the 'Decachord Psalter' the third. The fragments left of Gérard's notes lead to the same inference. Indeed, Gérard designates Joachim by these words: 'Ille qui fuit minister hujus operis.' A curious marginal note in the manuscript of the Bibliothèque Mazarine, which belonged to the College of Navarre, has the same meaning.‡ This note formally attributes to Joachim a book entitled 'Evangelium æternum,' and points out the place it occupies in the library of the College of Navarre. Therefore, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there were still manuscripts in which the three productions of

* D'Argentré, p. 163. After *hæc verba*, we must add: 'In primo libro Evangelii æterni, videlicet in secundo secundæ concordiæ. Et tria prædicta probantur similiter expresse xxi. capitulo, B, ubi distinguitur triplex littera. Ibi: "Attendent vero," etc. . . et similiter ante finem ultimi capituli, ubi dicitur: "Illud attendendum," etc.'

† See above, pp. 218, 219. It must be noticed that the work referred to here is not the complete commentary on the Apocalypse, but the preliminary book which Joachim wrote as an introduction to it.

‡ Here is the note corresponding with *Item quod per virum* in the second document: 'Nota ista usque ad finem de erroribus contentis in libro abbatis Joachim quem vocavit de Evangelio æterno, qui liber est in pulpitro affixo parieti. This note is written in a fifteenth century hand.

Joachim were collected and bore the common title of 'Evangelium æternum.' Such manuscripts must have been the fruits of the movement of 1254, since we have seen that Joachim himself never gave that title either to any particular work of his or to the whole collection of his writings. I believe that at the present day no library possesses a manuscript with such a title.

Despite an apparent contradiction, the fourth document enumerated above confirms the result we have just arrived at concerning the composition of the 'Eternal Gospel,' and proves that that was not only the private judgment of the Anagni Commissioners. In it we find that the 'Eternal Gospel' (properly so called) contained at least two parts. The first was called 'Præparatorium in Evangelium æternum,' the second 'Concordia novi et Veteris Testamenti,' or 'Concordia veritatis,' and was divided into five books. It is evident that the author of this document considered the 'Introductorium' or 'Præparatorium in Evangelium æternum,' which elsewhere is distinguished from the 'Eternal Gospel,' was the first book of that same 'Eternal Gospel.' The 'Concordance' becomes thus the second book. If there is here no question of the 'Apocalypse' and the 'Decachord Psalter,' this is, no doubt, either because they were considered as of minor importance, or because they only repeated the errors of the 'Præparatorium' or the 'Concordia.' But what unquestionably proves the truth of our

hypothesis is: 1st, that the errors given in the fourth document as taken from the first part of the 'Eternal Gospel,' entitled 'Præparatorium in Evangelium æternum,' are identical with those found in the report of the Cardinals at Anagni as extracts from the 'Introductorium in Evangelium æternum;' 2nd, that the errors given in the fourth document as extracts from the second part of the 'Eternal Gospel' are really extracted from Joachim's book the 'Concordance,' whose order and divisions are followed point by point. The difference is simply a difference of arrangement. We will adopt as preferable that followed by the Anagni Commission.

It is therefore an established fact that the 'Eternal Gospel' properly so called was nothing but the collection of the three chief writings of Joachim, and that, consequently, the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel' was distinct from it, though sometimes subjoined to it as a first book. This distinction is made evident in the report of the Anagni Commission. There we see, in fact, that the cardinals had in their hands a book entitled 'Introductorium in Evangelium æternum,' forwarded to the pope by the Bishop of Paris; we learn, besides, that the work was divided into chapters, not into books; lastly, the conclusion arrived at by the cardinals, that the 'Eternal Gospel' was formed by the collection of the three works of Joachim, is based upon their investigation of the 'Introductorium.' Here is another proof

of the same distinction. This Florent, Bishop of Acre, who appears as promoter in the trial at Anagni, becoming subsequently Archbishop of Arles, presided about the year 1260 over a council in which he again condemned the errors of Joachim. From the speech he pronounced at that council, it appears that the Anagni Commission meant to condemn pamphlets scattered about under the title of 'Gospel of the Holy Ghost' and 'Eternal Gospel,' and not Joachim's actual works, which, till then, had been little read and not discussed at all.* Lastly, Frà Salimbene calls the work of his friend Gérard a 'little book,' *libellum*.† Unfortunately, feeling the honour of his Order compromised by all this affair, he omits to give us the exact title of Gérard's pamphlet.

* 'Et licet nuper, præsentibus nobis et procurantibus, a sancta Dei sede apostelica damnata fuerit nova quædam, quæ ex his pullulaverat, doctrina venenata Evangelii Spiritus Sancti pervulgata nomine, ac si Christi Evangelium non æternum nec a Spiritu Sancto nominari debuisset; tanquam pestis hujusmodi fundamenta non discussa fuerint nec damnata, liber videlicet Concordantiarum et alii libri Joachitici, qui a majoribus nostri usque ad hæc tempora remanserunt intacti, utpote latitantes apud quosdam religiosos in angulis et antris, doctoribus indiscussi; a quibus si ruminati fuissent, nullatenus inter sacros alios et sanctorum codices mixti remansissent, quum alia modica Joachitica opuscula, quæ ad eorum pervenere notitiam, tam solemniter sint damnata;' etc. . . . (Labbe, 'Conc.,' vol. xi., 2nd part, col. 2361, 2362). Does it not seem as though Florent had under his eyes a note in which the writings were classified just as in the note to be seen at the close of MS. 1726 from the Sorbonne collection, 39us *inter originalia mixta sanctorum?*

† viii., 102, 233, 235, 236.

We are thus brought to consider the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel' as a book intended to sum up the doctrine of Joachim, and to revive it for the promotion of Franciscan ideas. At the same time the want of precision inherent to mediæval bibliography occasioned endless mistakes on the subject. The name of 'Eternal Gospel' was nearly always applied to the 'Introduction.' We have just had a proof of this in the words pronounced by Archbishop Florent at the Council of Arles. Matthieu Paris and Guillaume de Saint-Amour are both guilty of the same confusion; the former, when he says that the friar composed a book which began with these words: 'Incipit Evangelium æternum,' a book which he calls, further on, 'Novus ille liber quem Evangelium æternum nominant;* the latter, when he quotes as from the 'Eternal Gospel' words which are not to be found, at least not with the same meaning, in Joachim's works.† Nicolas Eymeric‡ represents as extracts from the 'Eternal Gospel' the errors found in the 'Liber introductorius' by the Anagni Commission. The librarian of the House of Sorbonne who, in the fourteenth century, added various notes to the end of MS. No. 1726, carelessly fell into the same confusion.

* viii., 1254 (London edition, 1571).

† 'Scripta sunt tria ipsa verba *Mane Thecel Phares* in illo maledicto libro quem appellant Evangelium æternum, quod jam in ecclesia propalatum est, propter quod timendum est de subversione ecclesiæ.'—'De peric. noviss. temp.,' p. 37.

‡ 'Directorium Inquisitorium,' p. 188 (Romæ, 1578).

It must be confessed that the Anagni documents do not, so clearly as might be desired, point to Gérard as the author of the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel.' The first Anagni document represents the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel' as a book composed of a continuous text and divided into chapters. With respect to that book, the cardinals cite, indeed, one of Friar Gérard's opinions, but they do not say whether that note is to be found in the work itself, or whether Friar Gérard is the author of the work. Elsewhere they vaguely say: 'Scriptor hujus operis,'* and they accuse him of representing himself as one of the twelve angels of St. Francis, regarded as a second Christ.† The second Anagni document, which no longer relates to the 'Introduction,'

* This passage is almost wholly omitted by D'Argentré. 'Item quod per virum indutum lineis intelligat Joachim scriptor hujusi operis probatur xxi. capitulo, circa medium, per verba de quinque intelligentiis generalibus et septem typicis, ubi sic ait: "Vir indutus lineis in apertione mysteriorum Jeremiæ prophetæ: ecce, ait, præter historicum, moralem, tropologicum, etc. . .' Item xxii., circa principium, ita dicitur: "Ad quam Scripturam tenetur populus tertii status mundi, quemadmodum populus primi status ad Vetus Testamentum, et populus secundi ad Novum, quantumcumque hoc displiceat hominibus generationis istius.'

† . . . 'Sic in principio tertii status erunt tres similes illorum, scilicet vir indutus lineis, et angelus quidam habens falcem acutam, et alius angelus habens signum Dei vivi' (here the MS. 1726 bears between the lines: 'scilicet sanctus Franciscus'). 'Et habuit' (D'Argentré 'habebit') 'similiter angelos duodecim, inter quos ipse fuit unus, etsi Jacob habuit duodecim in primo statu, et Christus in secundo.'

always refers to Joachim's works under their proper divisions, and mentions Gérard's notes as distinct. The most probable conclusion from all this is that two works were censured by the Anagni Commission: first the 'Introductorium,' the continuous text composed by Gérard; in the second place, a sort of new edition, or rather a series of extracts from the three authentic works of Joachim, with Gérard's notes,* either in the margin or in the text itself. The latter is the work which Florent (the promoter of the Commission) held in his hand, and from which he read. The two assistant readers, Friar Bonvalet and Friar Peter of Anagni, on the contrary, had before them Joachim's works themselves, verifying the quotations and distinguishing that which belonged to Joachim from that which belonged to Gérard. Sometimes, indeed, the Anagni reports seem to give the words of the two authors as indistinguishable.

There is, in fact, perfect harmony between the ideas contained in the notes of Gérard, as quoted by the Anagni Commission, and the ideas contained in the 'Liber introductorius.' All these notes are written in the spirit of the productions of John of Parma, and of the 'exalted' section of the Order of St. Francis. Antipathy against temporal papacy, hatred of the wealthy clergy,

* The style of the gloss is especially obvious in passages like the following: '. . . Illæ generationes valde breves erunt, ut apparebit inferius in multis locis' (omitted by D'Argentré).

the belief that the final abomination will come from a worldly and simoniacal pope, the fixing upon the year 1260 as the fatal date, the belief that the appearance of Antichrist is at hand and that that monster will spring up from Rome, the naming of St. Francis as the renovator of the century and of Joachim as his precursor—all these are traits which belong, without doubt, to that school which, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, extolled the name of Joachim as a support for its projects of social and religious reform. Several of the propositions of that school, referred to by Salimbene* and by John of Meung,† are found textually in Gérard's fragments, for the preservation of which we are indebted to the Anagni reporters.

Our documents do not throw any light on the parts played by John of Parma and Gérard respectively in the composition of the 'Introductorium.' The passage in which the 'author' ranks himself among the twelve angels of St. Francis is more in harmony with the character of John of Parma than with that of Gérard. The reports mention only Gérard, because, no doubt, they wanted to spare the General of the Franciscans. Salimbene, on his part, throws all the responsibility on Gérard, and displays great zeal in describing how the Order punished such errors.‡ However,

viii., 123, 240.

† 'Roman de la Rose,' line 12,014 and fol.

‡ Pp. 103, 203, 236.

he cannot deny that John of Parma was a staunch Joachimite, and created many difficulties for himself by holding such opinions.* Later, Nicolas Eymeric, not having, as a Dominican, the same motive for reserve, attributes to John of Parma, purely and simply, the list of errors constituting the doctrine of the 'Eternal Gospel.' John of Parma was doubtless, in one sense, the apostle and chief interpreter of the doctrines which sought to derive their authority from the name of Abbot Joachim. Yet nothing can warrant us in believing that John of Parma directly participated in drawing up a book pursued by so many anathemas. As regards Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino, there are positive proofs. Frà Salimbene, his colleague, his fellow-countryman and friend, accuses him, in various instances, of having composed a deplorable book falsifying Joachim's doctrine;† and he relates the dreadful disgrace which befell him without relaxing his obstinacy. Affò, who was the first to become acquainted with this important text, then unpublished, and after him Sbaraglia and Tiraboschi, accepted with reason the positive statements of Frà Salimbene.

The result of all this is that we possess, in the three chief authentic works of Joachim, the text of what was called the 'Eternal Gospel.' As for Gérard's notes, they are, in all probability, irretrievably lost, with the exception of the fragments

* Pp. 98, 124, 131 and fol.

† P. 103 and fol.; 233 and fol.

preserved in the indictment submitted to the Anagni Commission. Still less can we ever hope to come across the complete text of the 'Introductorium.' The rigour with which heterodox books used to be prescribed in the Middle Ages explains this disappearance. Several years after the sentence of 1255, Salimbene saw a copy of Gérard's work on paper, which had been copied at Rome by a notary of Imola. The guardian of the convent, knowing him to be an old Joachimite, came to consult him respecting the value of the manuscript. Salimbene took fright, and, perhaps fearing some snare, said that the work ought to be burned there and then; which was accordingly done.[*]

The volume used by Florent having had for its principal text a series of extracts from Joachim's works, doubts may arise as to whether the compilation contained in No. 1726 of Sorbonne, from folio 1 to folio 78 (the first document above referred to), should not be identified with that mysterious book. But the notes of Friar Gérard, as we find them in the acts of the Anagni Commission, are not to be found in our manuscript. We only discover on the margin short *scholia*, indicating the principal ideas of Joachim, and especially those chiefly insisted on by Gérard. A much more serious difficulty arises from the fact that in the extracts held by Florent, the three great authentic works of Joachim were

[*] Pp. 235-36; compare pp. 234-35.

alone quoted, whereas in our manuscript the apocryphal commentaries on Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 'De oneribus Provinciarum' occupy an important place. It must be noted that the compilation contained in our No. 1726 seems sometimes to have been made according to the fancy of the copyist: there are blanks and repetitions.* It cannot be identified with the edition cited by Gérard. We are of opinion that, among the Joachimite writings which have been preserved, that which is most similar to Gérard's work is the pamphlet beginning 'Helias jam venit,' mentioned above, pp. 230, 231.

What date can be assigned to the composition of the 'Liber introductorius in Evangelium æternum'? The fourth document above quoted furnishes us, on this point, with a precise indication. One of the errors found in the 'Liber introductorius' is the statement that the reign of the Holy Ghost will begin in six years, in 1260,†. which brings back the composition of the book to the year 1254. This is also the exact date assigned by Guillaume de Saint-Amour,‡ and well

* Florent doubtless alludes to similar compositions in his Council of Arles: 'Plurima super his phantasiis commentaria facta descripserunt' (Labbe, vol. xiv., p. 242).

† D'Argentré, p. 164. 'Quod novum Testamentum non durabit in virtute sua nisi per sex annos proxime futuros, scilicet usque ad annum incarnationis M.CC.LX.' D'Argentré's text wrongly gives 1269. Compare D'Argentré, p. 165, at the top; Salimbene, pp. 123, 223, 231, 240.

‡ 'Jam publice posita fuit ad explicandum Anno Domine 1254.' ('De peric. noviss. temp.,' Opp., p. 38.)

known to all the learned men who have studied the affairs of the University of Paris and the Roman Court of that period.*

By collecting the main facts arrived at in this discussion, we draw the following conclusions:

1. In the opinion of the thirteenth century, the 'Eternal Gospel' meant a *doctrine* (ascribed to Abbot Joachim) respecting the arrival of a third religious state which was to succeed the Gospel of Christ and become the final law of mankind.

2. This doctrine is imperfectly expressed in the authentic works of Abbot Joachim, who contents himself with a comparison between the Old and the New Testaments, and looks but timidly to the future.

3. The name of the Abbot Joachim was raised from obscurity towards the middle of the thirteenth century by the 'exalted' section of the Franciscan school. He was said to have predicted the birth of St. Francis and the creation of his order; and to have played a part with regard to Francis of Assisi analogous to that of John the Baptist with regard to Jesus; lastly, the doctrine attributed to him received the name of the 'Eternal Gospel.'

4. This expression did not convey the idea of a distinct work to the mind of most of those who heard or pronounced it. It was the *label* of a

* 'Histoire littéraire de la France,' vol. xx., pp. 27-28.

doctrine, just as the phrase the 'Three Impostors' summed up the averroistic scepticism, brought about by the study of the Arab philosophers and the Court of Frederic II.

5. Yet the title of the 'Eternal Gospel' used to be applied, with a more precise meaning, to the collection of the principal works of Joachim.

6. Distinct from that collection, there was the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel,' a work of small dimensions, composed, or at least brought to light, by Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino in the year 1254.

7. This 'Introduction' was the preface to an abridged edition of Joachim's works, to which was added a commentary by Gérard. These two writings, comprised under the compendious title of the 'Eternal Gospel,' and transmitted to the pope by the Bishop of Paris in the year 1254, were the object of the censure of the Commission of Anagni in 1255.

8. The text of the 'Introduction to the Eternal Gospel' seems to have been lost; but its doctrine has been handed down to us in the acts of the assembly at Anagni, and in the other sentences pronounced against the 'Eternal Gospel' (MSS. of Sorbonne, 1706, 1726; Bibliothèque Mazarine, 391). As for Gérard's notes, some fragments of them are still extant in the second Anagni document.

An example will best show the relation existing between these divers texts; also how one pro-

ceeded from the other by amplification or by interpolation. 'In chapter viii. of the "Introduction to the Eternal Gospel,"' say the cardinals who sat on the Anagni Commission, 'the author pretends that, even as at the beginning of the first state, there appeared three great men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the third of whom, that is Jacob, was surrounded by twelve persons (his twelve sons); and at the beginning of the second state there were three great men, Zacharias, John the Baptist, and Christ, the Divine Man, who, in like manner, had twelve apostles, so again, at the beginning of the third state, there shall be three great men similar to the first—viz., the man clad in linen, the angel holding the sharp scythe, and another angel carrying in his hand the sign of the living God. The latter shall also be followed by twelve angels, in the same manner as Jacob had twelve attendants in the first state, and Christ had twelve followers in the second. By the man clad in linen,' proceed the cardinals, 'the *author of this writing* means Joachim, as is proved in chapter xxi., towards the middle . . . and in chapter xii., where we find these words, "To that angel who carried the sign of the living God, and who appeared about the year 1200 of the Lord's incarnation"—an angel,' add the cardinals, 'whom *Friar Gérard* recognises formally as no other than St. Francis.'

That is a clear, well-defined theory, and one which could only have been produced towards the

middle of the thirteenth century by the exalted Franciscan school. If we open Joachim's 'Concordance,' we find, in the second treatise of the first book, a parallel between Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on the one hand, and Zachariah, John the Baptist, and Jesus on the other, occurring several times, though not expressed with so much precision; but there is no trace of a future triad destined to found a new religious state of mankind, and to which Joachim would belong. Generally speaking, Joachim's views on a third state meant to succeed to the New Testament, as that succeeded to the Old Testament, are very obscure and scarcely indicated.* The definiteness afterwards ascribed to his doctrine on this point, his prophecies respecting the Mendicant Orders, and the supplanting of the secular clergy by a religious Order which was to go barefoot—in a word, the prediction of the 'Eternal Gospel'—all this was the work of the thirteenth-century Joachimites, who, finding in the ideas of the Abbot of Flor about the parallel between the two Testaments a useful basis for their theology, adopted these ideas, and added to them the announcement of a third revelation, of which Joachim should be the precursor, St. Francis the Messiah, and they themselves the apostles.

* *Vide*, however, 'Concordance,' i., iv., last chapter, and epecially i., v., chap. lxxxiv. These passages may be interpolations by Gérard, as also that wherein Joachim expressly predicts the Mendicant Orders.

VI.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE 'ETERNAL GOSPEL.

The account of Frà Salimbene is therefore confirmed on all points by the study of the documents. The doctrine of the 'Eternal Gospel' flourished publicly in the Order of St. Francis, under the generalship and with the more or less open protection of John of Parma; but he himself never wrote anything under that title. The author of the condemned book was Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino. But neither Gérard nor John of Parma were the inventors of the system which startled Christendom in 1254. Long before this Joachimism had taken root among the ardent disciples of St. Francis. Salimbene relates * that, about the year 1240, an aged and holy abbot, of the Order of Flor, came to Pisa to request a religious Order there to take charge of the books of Joachim possessed by his convent. This convent was situate between Lucca and Pisa, and he was afraid, as he said, lest it should be ransacked by Frederick II. The best theologians of the Pisan convent began to read the books brought by the old abbot; they were struck by the coincidences between Joachim's prophecies and the events of the time, and, putting theology aside, they became ardent Joachimites. It may not be rash to suppose the books thus mysteriously entrusted to the

* P. 101.

Pisan Franciscans to have been Joachim's apocryphal writings—such as, for instance, the 'Commentary on Jeremiah,' composed about that period.* Enthusiasm does not understand veracity in the same way as vulgar common-sense; it does not think itself bound to submit to those scrupulous rules of literary probity which are proper to periods of criticism and reflection. Convinced of the higher truth of his personal inspiration, a prophet does not hesitate to call to his aid what sober-minded men would denounce as fraud and imposture.

Nearly forty years had elapsed since the death of the Abbot of Flor; his books, concealed in the cells of a few monks,† were known to only a small number of adherents; his person was surrounded by a legendary halo, his character of prophet was already universally accepted, and the existing belief in his having received special inspiration from the Holy Ghost for predicting the destinies of the Church, made him an excellent patron for the doctrine about to be established, and the germs of which actually existed in his writings. They put the patriarch of Flor in connection with the new movement; he was made to predict the apparition

* The adversaries of the Joachimites, seeming to have doubts as to the authenticity of these writings, call them 'prophetias hominum fantasticorum.'—Salimbene, p. 131.

† . . . 'Libri joachitici, qui a majoribus nostris usque ad hæc tempora remanserunt intacti, utpote latitantes apud quosdam religiosos in angulis et antris, doctoribus indiscussi.'—Council of Arles, Labbe, vol. xiv., col. 241.

of two religious Orders destined to change the face of Christendom.* His legend was based upon that of St. Francis. The great authority of the latter proceeded from the stigmata which assimilated him to Christ: Joachim also exhibited stigmata. Like Francis, he used to go about barefoot; like him, he included Nature and the animal world in a universal love. Joachim became thus sometimes the precursor of Francis of Assisi, sometimes the founder of a new faith, superior to that of the Catholic Church, destined to replace it and to last for ever. He himself was said to have had a precursor in the person of a certain Cyril, a hermit of Mount Carmel, a prophet like himself, and whose oracles were equally bold and far-seeing. His writings, whether genuine or apocryphal, were a sort of revelation in the eyes of the lower clergy. Being much less under the bondage of scholastic theology than the Dominicans, sometimes, indeed, being scarcely Christians, the Franciscans displayed in mystical speculation, and also in science and poetry, a

* Salimbene, pp. 118, 123, 124, 338, 389, 403. A tradition, highly credited among the chroniclers of Mendicant Orders, even pretended that Joachim caused St. Francis and St. Dominique to be painted in the Church of St. Mark in Venice, in the costume since accepted and preserved by Christian iconography. The idea that in the mosaics of St. Mark, representing scenes taken from the Apocalypse, we have a representation of Joachim's ideas is scarcely less improbable. Strange to say, the Jesuits also at a later date pretended to have been predicted by Joachim. *Vide* 'Acta SS. Maii,' vol. vii., pp. 141, 142.

freedom of thought which one would vainly seek in the Middle Ages outside that body.

Except by reading Frà Salimbene's curious work, it would be impossible to imagine to what extent Joachimite ideas had penetrated the Order, and how they had stimulaed mental activity. A holy man from Provence, Hugues de Digne, who preached before St. Louis, was the oracle of the sect; people flocked from all parts to his cell at Hyères, to listen to the terrors and the hopes contained in the new Apocalypse.* He possessed all Joachim's works written in large characters. He was generally looked upon as a prophet, and he was the father of a sort of third Order of roving mendicants, who went by the name of *Saccati* or *Boscarioli*. Hugues was the intimate friend of John of Parma, and perhaps his initiator in these dangerous novelties. Salimbene paid him frequent visits, and speaks of him as having been inspired. His sister, St. Douceline, was the foundress of the *Béguines* of Marseilles, and traces of the trials brought upon her by her relations with John of Parma and the leaders of the Franciscan movement are still discernible under the truly edifying tone of her Provençal biography.†

* Salimbene, pp. 98 *et seq.*, 124, 141-42, 148, 319, 320. Compare 'Histoire littéraire de la France,' xxi., p. 293; Albanès' 'Vie de Sainte Douceline,' p. xlvii. and fol.

† The 'Vie de Sainte Douceline,' published by M. l'Abbé Albanès (Marseilles, 1879), pp. xlix., 35, 37, 99, 115, 137, 155. M. Paul Meyer was the first to notice the importance of this document in the history of the Franciscan movement.—'Les derniers Troubadours de la Provence' (1871), p. 19.

The fever of Joachimism seized upon the loftiest minds. One of the leading men of his time, Adam of Marsh, the friend of Roger Bacon, in the heart of England, gladly received from Italy the smallest fragments of the works of the Abbot of Flor, which he used to forward at once to his friend Robert Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln,* calling his special attention to the menaces they contained respecting the vices of the clergy. Rapidly spreading from convent to convent, along the banks of the Rhône and the Saône, Joachimism reached Champagne, where it quickly found adherents. It was at Provins that Salimbene met with Bartholomew Ghiscolo, of Parma, and Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino, the two leaders of the sect.† As a rule, all these Joachimites were true saints, though very independent believers, attaching to their own ideas and to their master's writings as much importance as to the teachings of the Church and the authority of the Bible.

The general of the Order, John of Parma, avowedly shared in these chimeras;‡ several of the affiliated members ascribed to him a place among the angelic precursors of the new Gospel;§

* 'Paucas particulas de variis expositionibus abbatis Joachim, quæ ante dies aliquot per quemdam fratrem venientem de partibus transmontanis mihi sunt allatæ,' in the 'Monumenta franciscana,' published by J. S. Brewer (London, 1858), pp. 146, 147. Compare Salimbene, p. 99.

† Salimbene, pp. 101 *et seq.*, 318.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 131-33.

§ *Vide* above, p. 256.

they even wanted him to have twelve companions like St. Francis.* But the most exalted of Joachimites was friar Gérard de Borgo San Donnino. He had been educated in the kingdom of Sicily; he was still a young man, brought up in accordance with the fashion of the time, of amiable character, and pure manners.† As early as 1248, we find him in the convent at Provins, plunged in the study of Joachim's writings, striving to secure proselytes, and already disturbing the whole house with his sombre prophecies. Ghiscolo and Salimbene took his part, but the friars of France opposed him actively. About the year 1249 the little Joachimite community of Provins was dissolved. Ghiscolo was sent to Sens, Salimbene to Autun, Gérard to Paris, to represent the province of Sicily in the University. He studied there four years: during that time his ideas became still more lofty, and in 1254 he published a book which produced a great scandal. Numerous prophecies already pointed to 1260 as the critical year of the Christian world. Gérard boldly predicted that the inauguration of the new era was to take place in that year. Some misinterpreted passages from the Apocalypse (xi. 3, xii. 6, xx. 3 and 7) were supposed to give foundation to his strange calculations. In truth, all the dreams of the new millenarians were derived, by an exegesis arbitrary indeed, but in unison with the spirit of

* Salimbene, pp. 317-19.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 102 and fol., 233 and fol.

the time, from the great source of Christian hope, the book written at Patmos.

In chapter sixteen of that mysterious book we read: 'I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting (eternal) gospel to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people,' (Rev. xiv. 6, authorized version). Mediæval imagination could not ignore that text: it was compared with the Sibylline oracles, which were accepted by the tradition of the fathers of the Church, and which, themselves the result of the effervescence of the millenarian sects of antiquity, contained lofty aspirations. The corruption of the Church, so remote from the predictions of the Gospel, compelled the conception of some imaginary state in which the perfection so often promised would at last be realized.

'The Father reigned 4000 years in the Old Testament, said the preachers of the new faith ;[o] the Son reigned down to the year 1200; then it was that the spirit of life departed from the two Testaments to establish the Eternal Gospel; the year 1260 shall witness the beginning of the era of the Holy Ghost. The reign of the laity, corresponding with that of the Father, lasted as long as the ancient law; the reign of the secular clergy, corresponding with that of the Son, co-

[o] D'Argentré, *op. cit.*, p. 163 and fol. D'Argentré omitted the following passage: 'Item in iii. capitulo, circa medium, dicitur: "Opera quæ fecit Deus trinitas ab initio usque nunc sunt opera Patris"' (MS. 1706 reads 'Trinitatis') '"tantum," et post pauca: "Et illud tempus in quod operatus est Deus Pater est principium temporis Patris, et potest dici primus status mundi, etc."'

existed with the new law; in the third age an order shall reign composed in equal numbers of laymen and clerics,° and specially dedicated to the Holy Ghost. New sacerdotal rules shall take the place of the old ones; no one will then be allowed to teach or become a priest without going barefoot.† The sacraments of the new law have but six years longer to last.‡

'Jesus Christ and His apostles did not attain their perfection in a contemplative life. An active life used to confer sanctity until Joachim's time; now active life has become useless; it is contemplative life, whose rule is observed by the successors of Joachim, which justifies. Hence it follows that the clerical order shall perish, and its place shall be taken by a third order more perfect, that of the monks, announced by the Psalmist, where he says: "Capital *ropes* have been assigned to me."§ That order shall become strong when the clerical order shall decay. It shall be the order of the humble.‖ In the first age of the world, the direction of the Church was entrusted by the Father to certain great men who were married, and it is this which gives sanction to that class. In the second age of the world, power was con-

° This was one of the peculiarities of the Order of St. Francis, which admitted laymen in its brotherhood.

† D'Argentré printed, in mistake, *independentium* instead of *nudipedum*. He left out the indication of the censured passages, five in number. We read in the fourth document: 'Quod nullus est simpliciter idoneus, etc., nisi illi qui nudis pedibus incedunt.' D'Argentré puts here 'idoneus Evangelio.' Nicolas Eymeric has: 'Quod nullus simplex homo est idoneus ad instruendum hominem alium de spiritualibus et æternis, nisi . . . .'

‡ 'Quod sacramenta novæ legis non durabunt a modo nisi per sex annos.'—Preger, p. 36.

§ I need not point out to Hebrew scholars the curious misinterpretation here.

‖ 'Ordo parvulorum,' an allusion to the name of the Fratres Minores. Cf. Salimbene, p. 122.

ferred by the Son on certain members of the clerical order, and this makes the glory of that order. In the third age, the Holy Ghost shall cause one or more of the order of monks to reign, and that order shall thus be glorified. When the preachers of that order shall be persecuted by the clergy, they may go to the infidels, and it is to be feared,' it is added, 'that they will go among them only in order to lead them to battle against the Roman Church.°

'Discernment of the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures has not been bestowed on the pope; he can only discern the literal meaning. If he ventures to decide upon the spiritual meaning, his judgment is rash, and no account should be taken of it. Spiritual men are not called upon to obey the Roman Church, or to acquiesce in its judgment concerning spiritual things.

'The Greeks have done well to sever the ties which bound them to the Roman Church; they follow the dictates of the spirit more closely than the Latins, and are nearer to salvation.† The Holy Ghost saves the Greeks, the Son redeems the Latins, the eternal Father watches over the Jews, and will save them from the hatred of men, without ordaining that they shall forsake Judaism.‡

'The Old Testament, the work of the time when the Father reigned, may be compared to the newly-created sky, or to the light of stars; the New Testament, the work of the time when the Son reigned, may be compared to the second heaven, or to the rays of the moon; the "Eternal Gospel," the work of the time when the Holy Ghost shall reign, may be compared to the radiance of the sun.§ The Old Testament.

° 'Quod prædicatores et doctores religiosi, quando infestabuntur a clericis, transibant ad infideles; et timendum est ne ad hoc transeunt ut congregent eos in prælium contra romanam ecclesiam, juxta doctrinam beati Joannis, Apoc., xvi.'

† 'Quod papa græcus' (Nicolas Eymeric, 'populus græcus') 'magis ambulat secundum Evangelium' (Meyenberg, 'Spiritum'). The Magdeburg centuriators have also, 'Papa græcus.'

‡ D'Argentré, p. 165; instead of *infime*, read *in fine*.

§ D'Argentré makes another mistake in this passage. We

represents the vestibule ;° the New Testament represents the holy place ; the "Eternal Gospel" represents the holy of holies. The first was the age of law and fear ; the second, the age of grace and faith ; the third will be the age of love. The first was the period of slavery ; the second the period of filial servitude ; the third will be the period of liberty. The first was a starry night ; the second was the dawn ; the third will be broad daylight. The first was the image of winter ; the second that of spring ; the third will be that of summer. The first was the shell ; the second the stone ; the third will be the kernel. The first bore nettles ; the second roses ; the third will bear lilies. The first is represented by water ; the second by wine ; the third by oil : or else, the first by earth ; the second by water ; the third by fire. Septuagesima represents the first ; Lent the second ; Easter joy the third.† The Gospel of Christ is of the letter ; the Eternal Gospel will be of the Spirit, and will deserve to be called the Gospel of the Holy Ghost. Christ's Gospel has been enigmatical, the new Gospel shall be free from parables and images ; as St. Paul said : "We now see as in a glass darkly, but then (that is, in the third state of mankind) shall we see face to face."‡ The truth of both Testaments shall be unveiled ; the Holy Scriptures shall be divided into three parts, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Gospel,

must read : ' . . . . comparat vetus Testamentum primo cœlo, Evangelium Christi secundo cœlo, Evangelium æternum tertio cœlo.'

° *Atrio.* D'Argentré gives wrongly *Sanctuario*, according to No. 1706.

† *Vide* 'Concordance,' iv., cap. lxxxiv. I suppose many of Gérard's interpolations found their way into this part of Joachim's text.

‡ This passage is wrongly given by D'Argentré : ' Item, x. capitulo, D, dicit quod tertius status mundi, qui est proprius Spiritus Sancti, erit sine aenigmate et sine figuris ; unde, circa medium ejusdem capituli, ponit hæc verba : "Apostolus, 1 Cor. xiii., loquens de fide et caritate, distinguendo

this last word meaning the "Eternal Gospel."[o] The latter shall be as binding for the men of the third state, as the Old Testament was for the men of the first state, or the New Testament for the men of the second state,—although this truth,' it is added, 'may displease the men of the present generation.'

'Three great men presided over the inauguration of the Old Testament: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the latter attended by twelve persons (the twelve patriarchs). Three great men presided over the advent of the New Testament: Zachariah, John the Baptist, and Christ, followed by his twelve Apostles. In like manner, three great men shall preside over the foundation of the third state, which will be that of the monks: the man clad in linen (Joachim), the angel

---

statum fidei, scilicet secundum statum mundi, qui ænigmaticus est, a statu caritatis, qui proprius Spiritus Sancti est et est sine ænigmate, figuravit duorum Testamentorum [differentiam], ut patet alibi, quia comparando unum ad aliud dicit: *Ex parte cognoscimus et ex parte prophetamus*, et hoc quantum ad secundum statum; *quum autem venerit quod perfectum est*, scilicet tempus caritatis, quod est tertius status mundi, *evacuabitur quod ex parte est*, quasi dicat: Tunc cessabunt omnes figuræ, et veritas duorum Testamentorum sine velamine apparebit; et statim subdit: *Videmus nunc per speculum*," etc.'

[o] D'Argentré omitted nearly all this passage: 'Item, xxviii., capitulo, A, dicit Sacram Scripturam divisam in tres partes, scilicet in vetus Testamentum et Novum et Evangelium, quod capitulum totum est notabile, et totum legatur. Idem expresse habetur xxx. capitulo, ubi dicit: "Hæc tria sacra volumina;" et eodem capitulo, D, dicit: "Alia est Scriptura divina quæ data est fidelibus eo tempore quo Deus Pater dictus est operari, et alia quæ data est christianis eo tempore quo Deus filius operari dictus est, et alia quæ nobis data"' (D'Argentré, 'danda') '"est eo tempore quo Spiritus Sanctus proprietate mysterii operatur"' (D'Argentré: "Mysterii Trinitatis operabitur").

carrying the sharpened scythe (St. Dominique ° ?), and the angel bearing the sign of the living God (St. Francis), by whom God renewed apostolic life, and who, like Christ, had twelve apostles. The year 1200 has thus been that of the advent of new men, the year in which the Gospel of Christ lost its pre-eminence.

'Joachim's doctrine supersedes both Testaments. Christ's Gospel has not been the true gospel of the kingdom; it has not succeeded in building the true Church;† it has never led anyone to perfection.‡ Now will begin the reign of the "Eternal Gospel," which, announced by the advent of Elias, is about to be preached to all nations. The preachers of that new Gospel shall be superior to those of the primitive Church. As the solemn day shall draw near, those who preside over the Order of Monks must withdraw themselves more and more from the world, and prepare to rejoin the Jews, the ancient people. The triumph of the Order of the Monks,' it is vaguely added, 'will be achieved by one man, or by several men who shall be its representatives, and whose glory shall be that of the Order itself. A man shall appear among religious orders who shall be preferred to all others in honours and glory. This triumph shall be preceded by the reign of abomination, that is, the reign of a simoniacal false pope, who shall occupy the pontifical seat towards the close of the sixth age of the world. "This tribulation," said Friar Gérard, "will be such as nothing ever approached before, and it shall affect temporal as well as spiritual things. It shall come to pass about the year 1260. Then shall Anti-Christ appear, and, after a short interval of peace, a still

° This interpretation is not given in the manuscripts, no doubt because the Dominican censors would not have been pleased to see the name of their patriarch mixed up with these dangerous doctrines.

† 'Nec ædificatorium ecclesiæ,' and not 'Nec ædificatio,' as D'Argentré has it.

‡ 'Quod Evangelium Christi neminem ducit ad perfectionem,' omitted by D'Argentré.

worse tribulation shall begin. This will be only spiritual, and consequently more dangerous."'

The foregoing passages were followed by calculations borrowed from Joachim, and relating to the genealogies of the Old Testament considered as prophetic,* and by a series of predictions in which the author freely vented his hatred against the Church of Rome and the powers of the time. All the prophets were summoned to announce the imminent substitution of a poor and monastic clergy for the official Church, the early coming of Antichrist, and the abomination of desolation sitting in the holy place; that is, the advent of a worldly pope, who would bring into churches his minions and his horses—in short, the imminent ruin of that proud Babylon which gorged herself with the tributes of the whole world, and persecuted just men when they rebuked her for her impieties. It was reported that Joachim, when questioned by Richard Cœur de Lion about Antichrist, replied that he was already born in Rome, and that he would reign there, in order, as says the Apostle, to raise himself higher even than God.† Others asserted that Joachim disapproved

* 'Primus est error enumerandi carnales genealogias,' and not 'annales,' as D'Argentré has it. We must then read as follows: 'Secundus est studium noscendi momenta et tempora eorum quæ venient vel venerunt in secundo statu mundi per ea quæ venerunt in primo statu mundi. . .'

† Roger de Hoveden, apud Savile, 'Rer. angl. script.,' pp. 681-82. A similar reply is reported to have been made by Joachim to Adam de Perseigne. *Vide* 'Acta SS. Maii,'

of the Crusades, because even infidels were less opposed to the 'Eternal Gospel' than the Latins.* Whenever people expressed irritation at these sayings, he is said to have retorted: 'Those who hate the kingdom of heaven do not wish the kingdom of the world to perish; those who do not love Jerusalem do not desire the downfall of Egypt.'† The strongest images in the Scriptures were invoked to depict the chastisement of mercenary prelates and the vengeance of the saints. The abuses of the wealth and the temporal power of the Church were attacked with a virulence scarcely known to the most passionate period of the Reformation.

Such were the strange visions which agitated a few monks, and which, in 1254, dared to show themselves in open day. I do not know if I mistake the real bearing of these productions; but, considering the persistence with which, under one form or another, such ideas broke forth for more than a century, always from within the Franciscan community; seeing how closely they were connected with the heresies, the popular outbreaks, the political revolutions of the time; considering that ardent enthusiasts used to declare

vol. vii., pp. 138-39; Haméau, 'Histoire littéraire du Maine,' i., pp. 29-33.

* J. Wolf, 'Centenarii,' p. 197. It is remarkable that in 1248 the Joachimites displayed little satisfaction at St. Louis's departure for the Crusade.—Salimbene, p. 102.

† Salimbene, p. 103.

openly that the schismatical Greeks, the Jews, the infidels themselves, among whom they hoped to meet with less opposition, were better than the Latin Church over which they despaired of triumphing, I do not think there is any exaggeration in saying that they contained the germs of an abortive attempt to create a religion. A little more, and the thirteenth century, so extraordinary in many respects, might have witnessed the rise of a new religion, of which the Order of St. Francis contained the germ. Had the fanatics of the new Order been able to achieve their end, the world would have become Franciscan instead of Christian.* We shall now see how the attempt was crushed under the scholastic rigour of the Gallican Church, the firmness of the Court of Rome, the common-sense of a lay society which had just come to life, and above all the impracticability of its own schemes. Paris, where the new gospel elected to be born, was, of all places in the world, least favourable to its progress. Those dreams of perfection, those vague aspirations towards an ideal and superhuman state, broke down before the practical turn of the French mind.

* Such was certainly the opinion of Guillaume de Saint-Amour: 'Jam sunt 55 anni quod aliqui laborant ad mutandum Evangelium Christi in aliud Evangelium, quod dicunt fore perfectius, melius et dignius, quod appellant Evangelium Spiritus Sancti, sive Evangelium æternum, quo adveniente, evacuabitur, ut dicunt, Evangelium Christi.'—'De periculis novissimorum temporum,' p. 38. (Opera, Constantiæ [Parisiis], 1632.)

It is surprising with what clearness the chief representatives of the Paris University of that time, staunch adversaries of religious mendicity—Guillaume de Saint-Amour and Gérard d'Abbeville—foresaw the social bearing of the new monastic institutions.* Churchmen who did not share the exaggerated views of the Franciscans, and especially the Dominicans, who were their most steadfast adversaries,† might well complain of the affectation of confounding the doctrine of conventual poverty with that of the 'Eternal Gospel.' St. Thomas Aquinas condemned the ideas of the Joachimite school almost as severely as Guillaume de Saint-Amour; and Guillaume de Tocco, his biographer, relates that, having found in a monastery the works of the Abbot of Flor, he read them through, underlined all that he considered erroneous, and imperiously ordered that all that his infallible authority had thus cancelled should be neither read nor believed.‡

No doubt in the heat of the struggle, at a time when every weapon was good with which one's adversaries might be attacked, the University looked upon the 'Eternal Gospel' as a fair pretext

* *Vide* M. Daunou's article on John of Parma ('Hist. littéraire de la France,' vol. xx.), and especially that of M. Victor Le Clerc on Guillaume de Saint-Amour and Gérard d'Abbeville (*Ibid.*, vol. xxi.).

† Salimbene, pp. 104-108.

‡ 'Ubi aliquid erroneum reperit vel suspectum, cum linea subducta damnavit, quia totum legi et credi prohibuit quod ipse sua docta manu cassavit.'—'Acta SS. Martii,' vol. i., p. 667.

for casting a slur upon the monks, just as they themselves used to reproach the University with Averroïsm and the blasphemy of the *Trois Imposteurs*. Religious disputants seldom refrain from the disloyal practice of employing against a doctrine the exaggerations of which it may be capable. This time, however, the calumny was not without foundation. The abuse of logic, and the authority ascribed to Arabic comments, gave a certain colour to the accusations against the University. Between the 'Eternal Gospel' and the doctrine of religious poverty there existed, on the other hand, a real affinity, which the doctors of the University promptly detected. Mendicity had become the pretext for the strangest doctrines. Guillaume de Saint-Amour was constantly lecturing against the '*truands*,' the '*bons-valets*,' and other sects of mendicants, who used to say that 'manual labour is a crime; that we should always pray; that the earth becomes more fruitful by prayer than by work.' The Bishop of Paris, wishing to give the University the satisfaction of seeing a monk convicted of the gravest errors, referred the 'Introduction to the Gospel' to Pope Alexander IV., who appointed the commission of three cardinals, which we have already seen at work. In the month of July, 1255, was pronounced the judgment, whose preliminary reports are still preserved.

This was a satisfaction given to the University by the papacy, faithful to its rule of sacrificing

extremes to each other, but, out of consideration for the Order at which that sentence seemed to strike, the pope gave instructions that the condemned book should be secretly burnt at Anagni, whereas the sentence pronounced in the following year against the 'De periculis novissimorum temporum' of Guillaume de Saint-Amour was carried out with the greatest publicity.* The worthy Gallican Church was none the less proud of having stopped the advance of an erroneous doctrine, and preserved Christianity from a great danger. The artless satisfaction of the University in its victory is shown in the following bad verses, by Jean de Meung, the University poet:

'Et se ne fut la bonne garde
De l'Université qui garde
Le Chief de la Crestienté,
Tout eust été bien tourmenté
Quand, par maulvaise intention,
En l'an de l'Incarnation
Mille et deux cents cinq et cinquante,
N'est homs vivant qui m'en démente,
Fu baillé, et c'est chose voire,
Pour prendre commun exemploire
Ung livre de par le grant diable
Dit l'Évangile pardurable,
Que le Saint Esperit menistre
Si com il aparoit au tistre . . .

* Matthieu Paris, *loc. cit.* Fabricius points out that the sentence condemning the 'Everlasting Gospel' is not even mentioned in the Bullary, whereas the verdict concerning the 'De Periculis' is reported fully in it ('Codex apocryphus N. T.,' 2nd edition, vol. i., pp. 337-38).

A Paris, n'eut home ne feme
Au parvis devant Nostre-Dame
Qui lors avoir ne le péust
A transcrire, s'il li pléust . . .
L'Université, qui lors ière
Endormie, leva la chière,
Du bruit du livre s'esveilla,
Ains s'arma pour aller encontre,
Quand el vit cet horrible monstre . .
Mais cil qui là le livre mirent
Saillirent sus et le reprirent. . .'[o]

The blow dealt at the 'Gospel' could not fail to reach the apostles of the new doctrine. Though John of Parma had the wisdom to keep in the background, and to avoid the exaggerations of his own partisans, his zeal for the observance of the rule, his severity towards lukewarm members, created for him numerous enemies, who seized that opportunity for his overthrow. A general chapter, held at the Ara Cœli in February, 1257, raised the gravest charges against him; they accused him of preferring Joachim's doctrine to the Catholic faith, and of numbering among his intimate friends Léonard and Gérard, both of them declared Joachimists. He was compelled to resign the generalship. An intermediate party was formed between the lax portion of the Order and the rigorists: orthodoxy and a decorous mysticism carried the day in the person of St. Bonaventura.

[o] *Vide* 'Roman de la Rose,' line 11994 and fol., of Méon's edition. Also 'Historiens de la France,' vol. xxi., pp. 78, 119-20, 698, 768; P. Paris, 'Chronique de Saint Denis,' vol. iv., p. 374; 'Ancilloniana,' 1698, i., pp. 117-18.

The first step of the new general was to bring to trial his predecessor and his two associates, Léonard and Gérard. These two monks were sentenced to be put in irons, *and to eat the bread of tribulation and drink the water of anguish;* that is to say, to all the horrors of a subterranean prison, in which no one was allowed to visit them. Gérard died there without ever renouncing his hopes.* He was refused the rites of the Church; his bones were interred in the part of the garden used as an ashpit.

As to John, the sympathies which his noble character had won for him and the personal friendship of the new general softened his fall. He was allowed to choose his retreat, and fixed upon the small convent of Greccia, near Rieti. There he lived for thirty-two years in complete seclusion. He maintained his Joachimite opinions undisturbed. Two popes even thought, it is said, of making him a cardinal; the highest personages of the court of Rome were eager to be taught by him.† Towards 1289 he re-entered active life for a short time; his intention was to return to the Greeks, for whose reconciliation with the Church of Rome he had laboured in his youth. He fell ill at Camerino, where he died. His legend began

* Salimbene, pp. 102, 133, 233. According to another version, Gérard was set free by St. Bonaventura eighteen years afterwards, and Léonard died in prison. Fleury's 'Hist. eccles.,' book lxxxiv., No. 27. Salimbene does not mention Léonard's fate.

† Salimbene, pp. 131, 133, 317.

in his lifetime; it was modelled, point by point, on that of St. Francis of Assisi.* Miracles were worked at his tomb; his party was even powerful enough to obtain his canonization.

His Joachimite friends, with the exception of Gérard, all ended their lives as saints. On his deathbed, Ghiscolo had such wonderful visions that all the brothers who were present marvelled.† The good Salimbene continued to lead the unfettered life of a spiritual vagabond, sometimes lamenting the errors of his youth and deploring the injury done to the Order by John and Gérard, sometimes avowing with a certain pleasure that he himself had been a Joachimite, and that he never before or since knew such pious and amiable men.‡ The heroes of this singular movement being all very young, the expression 'Eternal Gospel' died out long before them. Since 1256 it has disappeared from history, in which it only figured for a year or two. Its fate was like that of some ephemeral party banner, raised in a critical epoch to represent for a moment a cause destined to take very different forms in the future.

* Salimbene, pp. 137-38. As regards the twelve companions, see pp. 317-19. See also the 'Vie de Sainte Douceline,' p. 136 and fol. (edition Albanès).

† Salimbene, pp. 101, 318.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 103, 122, 129, 130, 131, 141, 148, 227, 233, 235, 236.

VII.

THE CHEQUERED FORTUNES OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE 'ETERNAL GOSPEL.'

At the present time nearly all the world is agreed as to the great divisions of the intellectual history of the Middle Ages. Far from casting a uniform shadow, as people often fancy it did, the long night which extends from the downfall of antique civilization to the birth of modern civilization displays to an attentive eye the clear lines of an intelligible design. The night really only lasted until the eleventh century. Then came a renaissance in philosophy, in poetry, in politics, in art. This renaissance, which dawned in France, culminated in the first half of the thirteenth century, and then stopped. Fanaticism, the narrow spirit of scholasticism, the atrocities of the Dominican inquisition, the pedantry of the University of Paris, the incapacity of most contemporary sovereigns, brought about a complete decadence. In all Europe, except Italy, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were stagnant periods, during which thought existed no longer, literature was dead, art was dying, and poetry was mute. New fire, however, smouldered in the bosom of Italy. The real renaissance was being prepared; Italy did a second time for mankind what Greece had done the first time; she re-established the laws of truth and beauty; she

became mistress in all arts and sciences, the teacher of the human race.

There is no great age without its great religious movement. The renaissance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had its attempts at reform. It surprises those who closely study mediæval history that Protestantism did not arise three centuries earlier. All the causes of a religious revolution existed in the thirteenth century, but all were suppressed. There happened in the thirteenth century what might have happened in the sixteenth if Luther had been burnt, if Charles V. had exterminated the Protestants, if the Inquisition had succeeded throughout Europe as it succeeded in Spain and Italy. Aspirations towards a spiritual church and a purer worship arose on all sides. The 'Eternal Gospel' was only one among many other attempts to substitute a new religious and social order for that founded on the authority of the Established Church.

Just as the Italian renaissance felt the influence of the Greek world, so, in many respects, the religious movements of the thirteenth century had their origin in the Eastern Church. I have no doubt that the 'Eternal Gospel' may be traced to the Greek Church. Throughout the whole of his career Abbot Joachim was in close intercourse with Greece. Calabria, where he lived, and where his school handed down an almost unbroken tradition, was half Greek. His chief disciples, the writers of his legend, the prophetic personages

with whom he was connected, were all Greeks.* He himself visited Greece many times, in order, as the saying then was, to promote the reunion of the two Churches. This reconciliation was the chief object of all his followers. John of Parma spent several years with the Greeks, and at the close of his life wished to go and die amongst them.† All the school of the 'Eternal Gospel,' from Joachim to Telesphorus of Cosenza, at the end of the fourteenth century, proclaimed with one voice that the Eastern Church was superior to the Latin Church; that it was better prepared for the reformation about to take place, and that, with the aid of the Greeks, reform would triumph in the worldly Church of the Latins—reform which would only be a return to the *Spiritual Church* of the Greeks. Greece was the refuge of the *fraticelli* expelled from Italy by Pope Boniface VIII. At that time Greece appears to have been the promised land of all reformers. 'Perhaps,' says Fleury, 'they had been struck by some edifying remains of ancient discipline which they saw there —especially with the frugality and poverty of the bishops, so different from the pomp and grandeur of the Latin bishops of that time.'‡

When we remember that Greece was the hot-bed of Catharism,§ whose doctrines were obviously

* 'Acta SS. Maii,' vol. vii., p. 91, etc.

† Salimbene, pp. 148-49, 297, 319.

‡ 'Hist. eccl.,' i., lxxxiv., No. 35.

§ *Vide* the 'Histoire des Cathares ou Albigeois,' by M. C. Schmidt, of Strasburg (Geneva, 1848).

analogous with those of the 'Eternal Gospel;' when we see also the school of the 'Eternal Gospel' following a path similar to that of Catharism, and almost identified with that sect, we are induced to look upon the former as an offshoot of the latter, formed not by direct affiliation, but by secret influences. Catharism appears thus to have penetrated to the West by two routes, and to have given rise in the Middle Ages to two parallel heresies, whose results were almost identical, which were confounded with each other by public opinion, and whose progress was checked by the same means. These affinities become still more striking when we see contemporary authors ascribing to Amauri de Bène, in the early part of the thirteenth century, doctrines similar to those of the 'Eternal Gospel.* Amauri's doctrines themselves had the closest analogy with those of the Orleans heretics of 1022; which latter M. Schmidt does not hesitate to connect with the Catharist Church.†

Be this as it may, we cannot doubt that such attempts at reform sprang from a deep-rooted need.

* Cf. J. M. Meyenberg, 'De pseudo-Evangelio æterno,' §§ 2 and 3. St. Antonine ascribes to Amauri doctrines so identical with those of the 'Eternal Gospel,' that we are to suppose that he speaks of him not from direct knowledge, but by inference merely, and according to what was the recognised type of all sects imbued with Catharism and mysticism.

† 'Histoire des Cathares,' vol. i., p. 28; vol. ii., pp. 151, 287. See Dom Bouquet, vol. x., pp. 35, 536, etc.; 'Cartulaire de St. Père de Chartres, vol. i., p. 100 and fol., and the introduction by M. Guérard, p. 219 and fol.

Even after their condemnation, Joachimite ideas existed for nearly a century. They were chiefly active in the South of France, where the writings of the sect were industriously copied and circulated.* In 1260, a council, assembled at Arles by that same Florent who promoted the Anagni Commission, expressly condemned the partisans of the Joachimite *ternaries* and those who proclaimed the approaching advent of the Holy Ghost, the reign of the monks, and the abolition of images, parables, and sacraments. That same year, so long announced as fatal, saw, indeed, many novelties, such as the follies of Gérard Ségarelle and his apostles, and the first epidemics of the flagellants.† Never before had there been such a deluge of prophecies of all kinds,‡ or so many mendicant sects.§ Guillaume de Saint-Amour's last work, which dates from the same year, that book 'De Antichristo,' which so strangely bore the anagram of Nicolas Oresmé,‖ is almost

* 'Præsertim quum in partibus provinciarum quibus licet immeriti in parte præsidemus, jam plurimos etiam litteratos hujusmodi phantasiis intellexerimus eatenus occupatos et illectos ut plurima super iis commentaria facta descripserint, et, de manu ad manum dando circumferentes, ad externos transfuderint nationes.'—Council of Arles in 1260, in Labbe's work, vol. xiv., col. 242.

† Salimbene, 123, 124, 228, 240; D'Argentré, 'Coll. Jud.,' i., 367; 'Hist. litt. de la France,' vol. xxi., p. 477. See the passage published by M. Boutaric in the 'Notices et Extraits,' vol. xx., 2nd part, pp. 235-37.

‡ Salimbene, pp. 234, 235, 265 and fol., 284, 303, 308 and fol.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-124, 241, 242, 262, 330, 331, 371, 372, etc.

‖ *Vide*, in this respect, M. V. Le Clerc's discussion ('Hist.

entirely devoted to the refutation of Joachimite errors, against which, a few years before, the energetic defender of the University had carried on such a lively contest. Everyone was thinking of the future of the Church and its coming trials. 'Some,' says Guillaume, 'like Abbot Joachim, predict a peaceful era, opening with the advent of the Holy Ghost, and the appearance of a third Testament, during which men will be exclusively spiritual. Others, struck with the decrease of charity, and the evils multiplying in the Church, announce for the last days inspired preachers who will revive faith. Others again, promising peace and prosperity to the Church, assert that its old age shall last long, and be as vigorous as any former period. The inflexible Rector of the University refuses all these consolatory hypotheses: he devotes his book to expounding the sombre theories of the Antichrist, the horrors of the last tribulation, the flood of errors which shall precede the Judgment. The great interregnum of the Roman empire, the arrival of false missionaries (the mendicants), who invade the field of the true pastors, the blindness and cowardice of the prelates, the change in the office of the preachers, the false security in which the Church sleeps, the cessation of miracles, the progress of infidelity, the cooling down of charity, and especially the announcement of a new law which is to supersede

litt. de la France.,' vol. xxi., p. 470 and fol.). Guillaume's work may be read in Martène and Durand's 'Amplissima Collectio,' vol. ix., col. 1,273 and fol.

the Gospel,—all these appear to Guillaume sure signs of an approaching catastrophe. In connection with this he denounces with great force Joachim and his disciples, those ministers not of the Holy Ghost, but of the Antichrist, who dare to say that *Mane Thekel Phares* has already been written on the walls of the Church, that the Christian sacraments are dying out, that the Holy Ghost is still to come. Did not Joachim predict that about twelve hundred years after Christ's incarnation, a new chief, the pontiff of the new Jerusalem, that is of the Church in its third state, would arise in Babylon? More than sixty years have elapsed since that prophecy, and nothing has happened.* He is, therefore, a false prophet.

I should abandon the plan I have laid down were I to attempt to follow the influence of the 'Eternal Gospel' through the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth.† If we were writing that history, we should show the Franciscan and Joachimite ideas inspiring numbers of enthusiasts for more than a century; we should almost witness its triumph when the papacy fell into the feeble hands of

* Col. 1333-84. In the 'De periculis novissimorum temporum,' p. 38, Guillaume, expressing a similar thought, says fifty-five years, which puts the composition of the 'De Antichristo' about five years after that of the 'De periculis.'

† One of the most curious works written under the influence of Joachim's philosophy is the treatise on Christian symbolics, composed by Jacques de Carreto, and contained in No. 124 of the St. Germain collection. I would point out this singular work to some young paleographer.

Peter Celestine; we should see Boniface VIII., the strong successor of that pious and incapable old man, energetically rescinding the concessions of his predecessor, and the hatred of the *fraticelli* inspiring the bitter satires of Frà Jacopone and powerfully contributing to the reputation which this pontiff left behind him.* About the same time, a fanatic monk, Pierre-Jean d'Olive, takes up, in the south of France, the most subversive doctrines of Gérard de San-Donnino,† pretending that the millennium is at hand, and that it will consist in the literal observance of the rule of St. Francis; that, just as Christ's crucifixion opened a new era, so the moment of St. Francis's stigmatization put an end to the worldly Church and marked the beginning of an age in which evangelical life shall be thoroughly practised; that the virtues and labours of the Minorites will convert the infidels, the Jews, and the Greek Church, destined to prevail over the Church of the Latins;

* *Vide* Dom Luigi Tosti's 'Storia di Bonifazio VIII.,' i., pp. 183 and fol., 188 and fol. The Joachimite prophecies respecting this pope are overflowing with hatred: 'Ecce l'huomo della progenie di Scarioto . . . Neronicamente regnando, tu morirai sconsolato . . . Perchè tanto desideri il babilonico principato? . . .'

† Gui de Perpignan, in his 'Summa de hæresibus,' expressly identifies Joachim's errors with those of Pierre-Jean. See the pieces published by Father Jeiler in the 'Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft,' iii., pp. 648-59, and by Father Zigliara in his 'De mente concilii Viennensis in definiendo dogmate unionis animæ humanæ cum corpore' (Rome, 1878), p. 106 and fol. Compare 'Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte,' vol. vi. (1883), pp. 132-33.

that the rule of St. Francis being the truly evangelical law, it is not surprising that it should be persecuted by the carnal Church, as the Gospel was by the Synagogue; that, to fill up the measure of its crimes, the carnal Church must condemn the rule of St. Francis; that then the new law, better received by the Greeks, the Jews, the Saracens, and the Tartars, than by the Latins, shall return with those auxiliaries to crush Rome, who would not accept it; that that Church, commonly called universal, catholic, and militant, is the impure Babylon, the great harlot, given up to simony, to pride, to all vices, finally to hell, just as the haughty Vashti was repudiated, and the humble Esther crowned. The carnal Church shall then be burnt up by the hatred it has vowed against the doctrine of saints.

We should see round Pierre-Jean d'Olive a group of men filled with ardent zeal, preaching more emphatically than ever the reform of the world by poverty, and being alternately canonized and anathematized, according as the admiration excited by their noble character or the horror inspired by their temerity preponderated; by some called heretics, by others saints who wrought miracles. Bernard Délicieux, the sworn enemy of the Inquisition, was an ardent Joachimite.* The same pretensions put forward by Ubertin de Casal, Frà Dolcino, Michel de Césène, acquire special political and social importance from the

* Hauréau, 'Bernard Délicieux' (Paris, 1877), pp. 151-55.

alliance of the fanatical portion of the Order of St. Francis with Louis of Bavaria. Once more we should see the question of poverty dividing the Christian world, lighting up fires, creating an anti-pope; we should see a general of the Minorites, Michel de Césène,* taking the part of Franciscan ideas against popery, and seeking outside the Church support against that Church which condemned him. We should see in the third Order of St. Francis the chief nursery of those sects, half religious and half secular, whose ambition alarmed the Church and society: Bé-guins and Béguines, Fratricelles, Frerots, Bizoques (Binzocchieri, Frères bis, Bizets), Barbozati, Frères pyes, Frères agaches, Sack-friars, Friars of the 'pauvre vie,' Flagellants, Lollards, Apostolical Friars, *Apostles* even (for they went so far as to take that name), with whose appearance corresponds that of several apocryphal Messiahs, or so-called incarnations of the Holy Ghost, such as Gonzalve of Cuença.†

We cannot doubt that some bold and popular idea lay beneath those monastic exteriors, when we have all these sectarians unanimously declaring

Michel de Césène's doctrines were word for word those of Joachim as interpreted by John of Parma and Gérard de San-Donnino. *Vide* Baluze's 'Miscell.,' vol. i., p. 272 and fol.

† Cf. 'Direct. inq.,' p. 200; D'Argentré, i., p. 176; Fleury, book xci., §§ 42, 59, 60; xcvi., § 36; Tosti, *op. cit.*, i. p. 185 and fol.; Schmidt, 'Histoire des Cathares,' passim; and above all, Gui de Perpignan's 'Summa de hæresibus' (Paris, 1528, folio).

that they only acknowledge God; that they are not subject to any obedience; that they imitate the life of Christ and his Apostles; and that all the authority of the Roman Church—that Church doomed because of the wickedness of its cardinals and prelates—is to pass into the hands of the people.* In the Middle Ages, conventual garments were often only a safeguard, a guarantee of inviolability, often, also, a pretext for vagabondage, as is seen from the innumerable decrees of provincial councils against monks and vagrant scholars, who unlawfully wore the religious habit. The habit of St. Francis, closely resembling that of a beggar, was used in Italy and in the south of France to cover dangerous popular associations, such as those who condemned all work, elevated mendicancy into a duty, declared that perfection would consist in going wholly unclad, and uttered passionate invectives against wealthy and worldly men. There were others who asserted that they alone had the right to invoke the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands; that outside their Order none could be saved; that the prelates of the carnal Church were only deserving of contempt; that the popes, since the days of St. Sylvester, had all been seducers, with the sole exception of Peter Celestine; that no excommunication could reach them, since St. Francis's rule was superior to the pope and the Church. Taken as a whole, the Order of

Direct. inq.,' p. 201 and fol.

St. Francis had doubtless the right to repudiate any responsibility for such extravagances; yet the belief in a certain degree of relationship between the various communities of religious mendicants was based upon a real foundation. In the same way the *Catharists*, from the length of their robes and their austerity, were often confused with the friars of the third Order, under the names of 'Bonshommes' and 'Cagots.' If we glance at the records of the Toulouse and Carcassonne Inquisition,* we are rather surprised to find that all who were condemned by that redoubtable tribunal were friars of the third Order, or Béguins. Outward appearances, and often indications slighter still, were evidence enough for those inquisitors, who sent to the stake unfortunate wretches suspected of Catharism, merely because of their pale complexions: 'Audierat enim eos solo pallore notare hæreticos, quasi quos pallere constaret, hæreticos esse certum esset.'†

* Ph. de Limborch, 'Hist. Inquis., cui subjungitur liber Sententiarum Inquis. Tolosanæ ab anno 1307 ad 1323' (Amstelodami, 1692). Baluze, 'Miscell.,' vol. i., p. 213 and fol. MSS. of St. Germain, Nos. 395, 396 (Acts of the Toulouse Inquisition, from 1285 to 1304, unpublished), and several other pieces of the Doat Collection. Compare (ancient collection) No. 6,193. Study Bernard Délicieux's trial (Hauréau, *op. cit.*). The Minerva library at Rome possesses many similar documents. *Vide* chiefly the extracts from Bernard Gui's 'Practica,' in Molinier's 'L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France,' pp. 230, 231.

† 'Gesta episcoporum Leodiensium,' in Martène and Durand's 'Ampliss. Collectio,' vol. iv., col. 901.

Without having looked through the original documents we have just quoted, it is impossible to understand the importance acquired in the south of France by such secret societies. The corruption of the clergy provoked reactions worse than the original evil. It is remarkable that all the sympathies of those contemporary writers who have really transmitted to us the echo of public opinion, are for the Béguins and Catharists: they are the saints, and orthodox priests, on the contrary, are the heretics.* The same fact is equally noticeable in Lombardy. Milan especially had become a centre of hostility against the Church. Catharism was openly professed in that city. In 1280, a Béguine named Guillelmina represented herself as the Holy Ghost, and after her death miracles occurred at her grave. In the complicated struggles of those times, it is difficult to trace with certainty the divisions of the different parties. Alliances between extremes were not unfrequent. We thus see the Catharists openly protected by the Ghibellines, and the 'exalted' Franciscan party more than once allied with the emperor against the pope.

But neither these deceptive coalitions, nor any of the stratagems employed by the sectarians to mislead the authorities, sufficed to protect them. The Roman Church, aided by an order more disciplined than that of St. Francis, ceaselessly persecuted the popular associations which sprang from the rule

Vide C. Schmidt's 'Histoire des Cathares,' vol. i., p. 189.

of Assisi. On the one hand she strove to direct the harmless portions of those devout crowds; on the other, she punished seditious factions with imprisonment and fire. Thousands of Béguins and friars of the third Order were burned alive in the north of Italy and the south of France, in Flanders and in Germany, while elsewhere their co-religionists were looked upon as saints, and obtained the honours of popular canonization. There are the same contradictions in the historical accounts of their characters, their lives, and their morals. In one they are represented as idlers, delighting in vagabondage and depravity; in another as industrious associations, working for their livelihood, and of great purity of morals. It is probable that, in different countries and under different names, these societies deserved to be differently estimated. All that they really had in common was their dress, like that of the religious mendicants, and that austere and pious appearance which won the affection of the masses, but roused the suspicions of the Church-people, and excited the ridicule of men of the world.

The name of *heresy* being applied, in the Middle Ages, to any deviation from the rule of the Church, could not fail to be applied to them. This must not lead us to suppose that they always had a secret doctrine and a settled creed. Sometimes, no doubt, Catharist ideas, more often still those of the Gospel of the Holy Ghost, lay hid beneath

the robes of the monks; but, in most cases, their heresy consisted only in their suspicious mode of living. After the middle of the fourteenth century, these associations became only pious brotherhoods, subject to the Church, and directed by her; and it is thus that they still survive in Belgium, in Italy, and in the south of France. The idea of reform which they contained at the outset, continually opposed by the official Church, by the universities, by secular society, was thus stifled or limited to a small number of followers, made powerless by the ruling spirit of their order and of their epoch.

These aspirations towards an unknown religious future did, however, break forth at intervals up to the very threshold of modern times, and even beyond it. The deplorable spectacle presented by the papacy at the close of the fourteenth and towards the beginning of the fifteenth centuries again stirred religious feeling. In his severity against the high clergy and his Christian boldness, the prophet of Avignon, John de Rochetaillade, emulates Joachim himself.* A hermit of Calabria, Telesphorus, or Theolosphorus, of Cosenza, endeavoured to revive the authority of the name of his fellow-countryman, Joachim.† On Easter

* D'Argentré's 'Coll. jud.,' i., pp. 374-76; Fleury, book xcvi., § 33.

† 'Acta SS. Maii,' vol. vii., pp. 139, 140. Mayenberg, 'De pseudo-Evangelio æterno,' p. 21 and fol. 'Histoire littéraire de la France,' vol. xxv., p. 257. Laporte du Theil's 'Extraits,' vol. ix., p. 100 (No. 1108, Ottobon).

morning, in the year 1386, as he was weeping over the great schism and the decline of the Church, an angel appeared to him and ordered him to read the prophecies of Cyrillus and Joachim, informing him that he would find the present misfortunes and the end ordained by God predicted in them. Telesphorus hastened to collect Joachim's prophecies, which he found scattered over the monasteries of Calabria, and wrote a book applying them to his century. He tried to prove, by means of those mysterious oracles, that the Romish Church was on the eve of being exterminated by the Greeks, the Saracens, and the Tartars, instruments of the divine wrath, who would purify it by depriving it of the temporal goods which had corrupted it; that, instead of the false pontiff, there would appear an angelic pastor, who, combining his power with that of the emperor, would spread the 'Eternal Gospel' throughout the earth.* Then would come the reign of the Holy Ghost, an age of bliss and perfection, during which the schisms and scandals which tried the Church in past centuries should completely disappear. Knowledge should be given to everyone, for a contemplative life should be open to all without needing instruction from the

* 'Insurget sanctissima et nova religio, quæ erit libera et spiritualis, in qua romanus pontifex dominabitur spiritualiter in omni gente a mari usque ad mare. Erit autem illud in tempore vel circa tempus persecutionis Babylonis novæ, id est Romæ, tempore angelici Pastoris, quando afflicta nimis ecclesia liberabitur a jugo servitutis illius.'

doctors. The Greeks and the Jews, whom evangelical law was powerless to bring into the fold, should be converted, and surpass in holiness and fervour the ancient Latin people. This was simply a reproduction of the dreams of Joachim, of John of Parma, of Pierre-Jean d'Olive.

In 1388 these ideas were again disseminated in Paris by Thomas of Puglia, who, like thousands of others, proclaimed the reign of the Holy Ghost, the end of the rule of the prelates, and the inutility of sacraments. The Bishop of Paris, Pierre d'Ougemont, handed him over to the secular authorities; but since the reign of Charles V. common-sense had acquired a certain influence in the world: the physicians declared him mad, and his book alone was burned.* Wilhelm of Hildernissem and the 'intellectual brotherhood' disseminated the same doctrines in the Flemish countries about 1411.† In Pierre d'Ailly, then Bishop of Cambrai, they met with another Guillaume de Saint-Amour —I mean a zealous guardian of the Gallican tradition, a tradition essentially episcopal, and always opposed to the sectarian and monastic spirit.

The sixteenth century saw several renewals of these efforts.‡ It is worthy of remark that the early reformers regarded Joachim as an ally. His apocryphal works were read eagerly by Protestant

° D'Argentré, 'Coll. jud.,' i., 2nd part, p. 151.

† *Ibid.*, i., 2nd part, p. 207.

‡ See, on this point, Meyenberg's monograph, already quoted several times.

writers, anxious to discover their predecessors. J. Wolf, especially, in a compilation entitled 'Lectionum memorabilium et reconditarum centenarii xvi.' (Lauingen, 1600), embodied all the passages from Joachim and the Joachimists which favoured the doctrines or the antipathies of his co-religionists.* It is the most peculiar collec-

* Here are some of those curious passages (Wolf, i., p. 488 and fol.). I have verified most of them, and found they were corect :

'Nullus populorum legitur ad tantam amaritudinem perduxisse Romanam Ecclesiam sicut domesticus Alemannus.—Videat Ecclesiam si, de acceptandis et improbandis electionibus principum, confusionis maculam non incurrit : qui tangit picem inquinatur ab ea ; qui communicat superbo induet superbiam.—Intra Ecclesiam romanam sunt mercenarii plurimi non pastores qui etiam bestiæ dicuntur a vastando, dracones a sæviendo, struthiones a simulando, sirenæ a luxuriando, pilosi a propinquos amando.—Transcendit papale prætorium cunctas curias in calumniosis litibus et quæstibus extorquendis.—Ad Petrum dictum fuit : quum senueris, alius te cinget et ducet quo tu non vis.—Quid dicam de summo pontifice Aarone, qui modernos præsules representat, qui ad instantiam populi qui egressus fuerat de Ægypto vitulum conflavit et sculptile, quod totum ad librum Decretalium referendum est, in quo omnis dolus et calumnia perseverat : ac per hoc curia Sedis Petri nullum pontificat qui hujus simulacra non adorat.—Quod Deus minus puniet laicos quam clericos et prælatos, quia minus voluntatem Dei cognoverunt.—Quod principes alemannorum jura temporalia executient ab Ecclesia romana.—Quod Ecclesia prius confundenda et spolianda et prædanda ac captivanda est ab Imperio.—Quod Ecclesia putabit ut Imperium alemannorum et regnum Franciæ sibi favorem impenderent et a cunctis molestiis eam liberarent, sed nihil ab eis habebit prosperum.—Quod auctor usque modo prohibitus est revelare et denudare

tion of maledictions imaginable. The tone of implacable hostility and concentrated fury would rather surprise those who look back to the Middle Ages as a period of perfect submission to the Church.

We will abstain from inquiring whether, in our days, Joachim could still claim any legitimate successors.* To preserve the exact meaning of the words 'Eternal Gospel,' they should be applied solely to the first phase of that vast movement, the centre of which is in the Order of St. Francis, and which gave rise to such curious popular aberrations. Such as it is, despite its faults and its failure, that endeavour is nevertheless the boldest attempt at religious creation made in modern times; and it would have changed the face of the world, had not its progress been arrested by the

ignominiam matris suæ Ecclesiæ, sed nunc cogitur prodere ejus iniquitates. Ait enim: Pudorem mihi ingero, quia meæ matris pudenda denudo.—Quod oppressi ab ecclesiasticis clamant ad Deum dicentes: O Deus quousque non vindicas sanguinem innocentum sub altari clamantium.—Quod Ecclesia Latina et Romana graviora quam Græca passura est in proximo, quia nequiora commisit.—Quod ipsi prælati et Ecclesia carnalis erubescere deferent ad redargutionem virorum spiritualium et doctorum et a culpa desistere. Sed quia factus est eis fronis meretricis et induruit malitia, nolunt erubescere.—Quod apprehendendus est Petrus, scilicet Summus Pontifex, et ligandus,' etc.

* We must not, however, forget the beautiful romance of *Spiridion*, in which Joachim's figure was skilfully drawn and brought into the picture with marvellous art. On this point Madame Sand owed much to M. Pierre Leroux.

disciplined intelligence of the thirteenth century. The Roman Church, the Paris University, the Order of St. Dominic, the civil power, so often opposed to each other, entered into a league against pretensions which would have shaken the very groundwork of human society. The extreme severity of the means employed to annihilate these strange doctrines is revolting to us; many praiseworthy aspirations were included in the same condemnation; yet true progress owed little to these good sectarians. It sprang from the parallel movement which directed the human mind towards science, political reform, the definitive constitution of society. As early as 1255, it was easy to see that progress, as modern societies understand it, comes from above, not from below; from reason, not from imagination; from common-sense, not from enthusiasm; from wise men, not from illuminati who seek in chimeras for the secrets of destiny. No doubt thinkers must respect men who, impelled by a lofty ideal of human life, protest against the imperfections inherent in all social states, and dream of some ideal law in conformity with the requirements of their hearts; but no human efforts can remove the bounds of possibility. The world is the result of causes too intricate to allow it ever to be compressed within an absolute system. No symbol can ever represent the progress of mankind in the past, much less serve as the rule of its future.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

M. KARL HASE'S work, entitled 'Franz von Assisi' (Leipzig, 1856), is a little masterpiece of religious criticism. M. Hase treats ecclesiastical history in a way of his own. A professor of theology and member of the Upper Council of the Saxon Church, at the same time that he is devoid of prejudice, and convinced that God does not regard forms or symbols, but only the heart of man, he has invented phrases of admirable discretion and nicety, in order to state important religious facts without any reference to *confessional* considerations. If in some portions of his numerous writings, and above all in his 'History of the Church,' his determined moderation, which is somewhat assumed, and his tone, at once ironical and caressing, lead him into a certain obscurity, into far-fetched allusions and a trick of half-expressing what he means, which may be thought laboured and affected, in his 'Life of St. Francis of Assisi' such defects are scarcely seen. Here one has nothing but praise for his sound judgment, his accurate style, and his mastery of his subject. It is fortunate that this excellent book

has found a competent translator. In this little volume M. Charles Berthoud has displayed perfect knowledge of religious history, and great aptitude for scholarly investigations. It is not exactly a translation which he has given us. M. Hase's thought is throughout scrupulously respected, but according to a custom prevalent in our own days in translating German works, and which, for my part, I regret, M. Berthoud has altered certain chapters and omitted some of the notes. Such as it is, M. Berthoud's is certainly the best work extant in French on the life of him whom one of his disciples calls the 'patriarch of mendicants.'*

Francis of Assisi has unparalleled interest for religious criticism. Of all men, after Jesus, he possessed the clearest conscience, the most perfect simplicity, the strongest sense of his filial relation to the Heavenly Father. God was truly his beginning and his end. In him, Adam seemed never to have sinned. His life is a poetic madness, a perpetual intoxication of divine love. For a whole week he lived on the chirp of a grasshopper. His eyes, clear and deep as those of a child, penetrated to the inmost secrets, those things which God conceals from the wise and reveals to the humble.

* '*François d'Assise*, étude historique, d'après le docteur Karl Hase, professeur à l'Université d'Iéna,' par M. Charles Berthoud.' Paris, Lévy, 1864, small 8vo. M. Frédéric Morin's work, 'St. François d'Assise et les Franciscans (Paris, Hachette, 1858), is very valuable in parts. But it represents Francis too much as an organizer, almost as a politician.

We can closely study that prodigy of holiness, that miracle of meekness and simplicity in one who achieved enormous popularity, who was always conspicuous, and who proved himself a great man of action and a successful originator.

Centuries deficient in virtue like ours are essentially sceptical. Judging everyone by themselves, they call the great ideal figures of the past impossible and chimerical. To please certain minds, history should be constructed without a single great man. When you show them a picture surpassing the level of mediocrity to which they are accustomed, they accuse you of introducing legend into history. They believe that all men have been as base and selfish as themselves. Now this is one of the richest and most complete of legends. Francis of Assisi stands before us in a light as ethereal as Jesus and Sakya-Muni. And yet, we have abundant proof that, apart from its miraculous surroundings, the real character of Francis of Assisi answered exactly to the portrait which remains of him. To me, Francis of Assisi has always been one of the most powerful reasons for believing Jesus to have been nearly such as the synoptical evangelists described him. Recent examples might lead us to imagine that the great founders of the faith were egotists, full of self-importance, entirely preoccupied by their mission and sacrificing everything to it. It is certain that if any man, in our time, should attempt to do even part of what Francis of Assisi did, he would

soon be ruined. But let us never take our own age as our criterion when we would judge of anything great in history. Francis experienced the most extraordinary popularity. without showing the smallest vanity or self-consciousness. The people made a saint of him before his death, and yet he never lost his simplicity.

Though legendary and tinged with the supernatural, the life of Francis of Assisi is, nevertheless, well known to us. Paintings almost contemporary have preserved his features. We see, as though it were still alive, that fine Italian face, thin and pale, with its large eyes, its regular features, its almost playful smile, its extreme mobility. The three legends of Francis of Assisi—one (that of Thomas of Celano) written three years after his death; the second (that of the 'Three Companions,' Leo, Rufinus, Angelus) seventeen years later than that of Thomas of Celano; the third, composed by St. Bonaventura, yet seventeen years later—are masterpieces of simple compilation, in which one sees clearly what may be attributed to imagination and what to historical fact. These great legends, at once ideal and real, were the special heritage of the Order of St. Francis, or perhaps of the thirteenth century. The book of the 'Dits des quatre ancelles,' or 'Life of St. Elizabeth,' composed from the narratives of the four women who waited on her, is a mirror of wonderful lucidity. These are the texts we must read to understand what a legend is; how a narra-

tive full of anecdote, and fabulous in form, may be truer than truth itself; how the glory of a legend belongs in a measure to the great man on whose life it is founded, and who so worked on the imagination of his humble admirers as to enable them to see in him features which without him they could never have invented.

Unfortunately this is not always the case. The physiognomy of great leaders is often transformed by their disciples. Sometimes the legend creates the hero, but often also the hero creates his own legend. In other words, there are legends which without being biographies or histories (these words must be limited to statements of facts, in which there is nothing supernatural) are true portraits. In such cases a simple operation will discover the truth: discard all that is marvellous, the tendency to the concrete and the anecdote, which materialises the idea and concentrates in a particular story the features which revealed themselves piecemeal in the course of a life. Those who think that the fabulous character of a biography totally deprives it of historical worth, should assert that Francis of Assisi never existed, that he was a myth created to express the ideal conceived by his disciples. The reverse of that opinion is the true one. The Franciscan movement had its initiative in the strong impression made by Francis of Assisi on some disciples of kindred spirit, though much inferior to himself. The legend of St. Francis presents the aspect with which we are

acquainted because it really was his own personality whose image he impressed on the minds of his disciples. The beauty of the portrait belongs in this case to the original, not to the genius of the artist who painted it.

The cause of this remarkable exception is quite simple. That which distinguishes Francis of Assisi, in his century and in all centuries, is his complete originality. He is undoubtedly a Christian, and even a Christian obedient to the Church; but his piety is of a unique kind. It is probable that in France, or, indeed, anywhere but in that sweet and shady Umbrian valley, he would have been accused of heresy. He drew little from the Bible, which he seldom read. He was no scholastic; he was neither priest nor theologian. He was equally free from mediæval superstition, specially that relative to saints; without avowing it, he knew he was their equal. His character was moulded first by Umbria, the 'seraphic province'—the Galilee of Italy, at once fertile and wild, smiling and austere—then by Provençal poetry. He was fond of the *troubadours;* in many respects he took them as his models. He used their tongue for praying and singing. From their name (*jugleor*), he called his disciples 'Jongleurs de Dieu.'

What belongs to himself alone is his way of feeling. Even Buddhism has nothing like it. Francis is superior to the Buddhistic 'arhân.' He delights in reality; he disdains nothing; he is indifferent to

nothing; he loves everything; he has a smile and a tear for all; a flower sends him into ecstasies; he sees in Nature only brothers and sisters. What most revolts us in Oriental asceticism is the frightful baldness to which it reduces life. I saw one of those Eastern ascetics in an Egyptian village, near the desert.* He had been there for twenty years, sitting on the sand, plunged in lethargy, neither seeing nor hearing; his legs were as thin as the bones of a skeleton. The sun, scorching his skull, had shrivelled up all consciousness; he had less life than the reed or the palm-tree. Stylites and Fakirs create a void around them till they stupefy themselves. Francis of Assisi was the reverse of this. For him everything had meaning and beauty. We know that admirable canticle which he is believed to have named the 'Creatures' Song;' it is the finest religious poem since the Gospels, the most complete expression of modern religious sentiment.†

'Highest omnipotent good Lord,
Glory and honour to Thy Name adored,
And praise and every blessing.
Of everything Thou art the source.
No man is worthy to pronounce Thy Name.

* At Tel-el-Kébir, on the borders of the isthmus of Suez.

† The authenticity of this canticle seems indubitable; but it must be noticed that we do not possess the Italian original. The existing Italian text is translated from a Portuguese version, which was a translation from the Spanish. The original canticle was versified by Friar Pacificus. The present text is written in prose.

'Praised by His creatures all,
Praised be the Lord my God,
By Messer Sun, my brother above all,
Who by His rays, lights us and lights the day—
Radiant is she, with His great splendour stored,
Thy glory, Lord, confessing.

'By Sister Moon and stars my Lord is praised,
Where clear and fair they in the heavens are raised.

'By Brother Wind, my Lord, Thy praise is said,
By air and clouds and the blue sky o'erhead,
By which Thy creatures all are kept and fed.

'By one most humble, useful, precious, chaste,
By Sister Water, O my Lord, Thou art praised.

'And praised is my Lord
By Brother Fire—he who lights up the night;
Jocund, robust is he, and strong and bright.

'Praised art Thou, my Lord, by Mother Earth,
Thou who sustainest her and governest,
And to her flowers, fruit, herbs, dost colour give and birth.

'Praised by our Sister Death, my Lord, art Thou,
From whom no living man escapes.
Who die in mortal sin have mortal woe;
But blessed they who die doing Thy will,
The second death can strike at them no blow.'[o]

Here is none of the constraint of Port Royal and the mystics of the French school of the seventeenth century, none of the exaggeration and frenzy of the Spanish mystics. At the point to which Francis of Assisi had attained, death became meaningless. In his eyes no natural

[o] We quote from the admirable version given by Mrs. Oliphant in her 'Francis of Assisi,' as it would be impossible to supply a new one equally excellent.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

object was antipathetic or contemptible. He used to pick up the worms from the roads that they might not be trodden upon; he exerted his ingenuity to save lambs from death or from the rough attacks of goats; he used to release animals caught in traps, giving them good advice so that they might not again fall into danger. He loved even the purity of a drop of water, and tried to prevent it from being sullied. That great mark of a mind free from vulgar pedantry, affection for animals and sympathy with them, was stronger in him than in any other man. Far removed from the brutality of the false spiritualism of the Cartesians, he only acknowledged one sort of life; he recognised degrees in the scale of being, but no sudden interruptions; like the sages of India, he could not admit that false classification which places man on one side, and, on the other, those thousand forms of life of which we only see the outside, and in which, though our eyes detect only uniformity, there may lie infinite diversity. For Francis nature had but one voice. One day, as he was returning to his hermitage at Monte Alverno, he heard crowds of birds chirping near his cell. 'See, brother,' he said, 'how our sisters seem to rejoice at our arrival!' Later, in the hour of his death, St. Bonaventura relates with wonder that larks, those lovers of light, circled joyously round the roof of his house, already wrapt in the shade of evening.

His thorough goodness makes these miracles of

simplicity appear credible. He had acquired the indulgent tenderness of a great artist, of all beings the one nearest to God. Imitating the Heavenly Father, who causes His light to shine alike on the just and the unjust, or the sun which every morning smiles equally on the great swarms of men rising to go each where his desire leads him, he does not believe in evil: he does not admit its existence. Not that he was indifferent; but, reading all hearts, he considered meanness the only unpardonable sin. Avarice, the narrow sentiment of the father of a family, who thinks of his children more than of his soul, is the only vice on which he is severe. Weakness and error are to him scarcely sins. He wishes brigands to be well treated; he is persuaded that hunger is the cause of all misdeeds. To a man who had just been robbed, and who was uttering blasphemous imprecations, he offered all he possessed, provided the man would no longer rail at Providence. Like the Heavenly Father, he also has a secret sympathy for sinners; certain weaknesses appear to him marks of goodness, certain errors to proceed from the vivacity of strength. We all know the story of the wolf of Gubbio. Francis having stipulated that he should have a daily allowance, the wolf, duly fed from house to house, renounced his murderous habits. This M. Hase, not without reason, compares with the paternal processes of the old pontifical government, which used to pension brigands in order to convert them.

We may say that Francis of Assisi was the only perfect Christian since Jesus. He stands alone, as having with boundless faith and love endeavoured to fulfil the law laid down in Galilee. His rule was simply the Sermon on the Mount, with nothing altered or explained away. Francis never wished to be the head of any particular order; his only desire was to practise evangelical morality, to realize the primitive ideal of Christian perfection. The thesis of the book of the 'Conformities' is the true one: Francis was really a second Christ—or rather, he was a faithful mirror of Christ. The fundamental idea of the gospel is the vanity of worldly cares which turn men aside from the joys of the kingdom of God. Such is also the essential principle of Francis of Assisi. To him, as to Jesus, birds seem to lead a perfect life: they possess no barns; they sing unceasingly; they always live on God's gifts, and never want anything. Dante, whose sentiment is in many respects much more Umbrian than Tuscan, said in admirable verse: 'Bereaved of her first husband, Poverty, that spouse to whom, as to Death, no one willingly opens his door, had been despised and neglected for eleven hundred years, when this one, before the Heavenly Father and the celestial court, took her for his bride and daily loved her more.' Our century, whose essential feature is to judge things, not by their æsthetic or moral value, but by their material disadvantages, cannot understand such absolute idealism. Its

pretension is to do great things without moral greatness. Its inexperience in history, its assumption of inaugurating a new era, inspire it with exaggerated confidence in wealth. Here is a poor man, the son of a tradesman of Assisi, a sort of lunatic—by turns beggar, cook, and vagabond—who achieves a work such as will never be achieved by our great men of action and our capitalists,—a work which lasts for seven or eight centuries, and which implies principles true for all time.

II.

The leading idea of Francis of Assisi, the idea that it is wrong to possess anything; that it is more noble to be poor than to be rich; that mendicity is a fine thing and even a virtue, requires close examination. In the first place, it must be noticed that Francis forbids appropriation, but by no means forbids enjoyment. Now there are cases where enjoyment supposes possession; but there are others where possession excludes enjoyment, the best things being by their nature indivisible. What things afford man the fullest joy? Precisely those which belong to nobody, such as national glory, a great past, the masterpieces of poetry, religious impressions, the sea, uncultured plains, forests, deserts, the snow-clad mountain-tops. There is no poetry in Beauce or Normandy. A country intersected with boundary walls, where we tread excellent roads, where

everybody enjoys nature within his own garden, is scarcely poetic. At first sight it seems as though the dream of Francis of Assisi would have put an end to art and noble life. And yet this sordid mendicant was the father of Italian art. Painting his legend on his tomb brought the genius of Cimabué and Giotto to light. Art, that refined aristocrat, obstinately refuses its services to the rich; it works either for princes or for the poor. In spite of her millions, wealthy England will never have an art worthy of the name. Art is the child of a society with lofty aims, living for glory and the ideal. It can accommodate itself to municipal republics, to the princely life of an almost sovereign aristocracy, and to monastic life, because that life permits of broad extensions, of great works undertaken in common. I see clearly what kings, republics, princes, nobles, monks, and the poor have done for civilization; but I cannot conceive what grand achievement could be the result of a society founded upon the selfishness of individual possession. I fear the final result of such a society would only be deplorable mediocrity.

I should no doubt be accused of paradox, were I to assert that the ideas of Francis of Assisi are the remedy for this evil of our time. The theory of the pre-eminent merit of almsgiving will not, in these days, meet with many partisans. We must also acknowledge that the enmity of the Franciscan school to wealth and economy was

in many respects exaggerated. Possession is not an evil. It is, indeed, true that the acquisition of riches implies some imperfection: because if the wealthy man had been less eager for gain, less engrossed in business, more mindful of his spiritual life; if he had given more alms and shown more of that liberality which marks a lofty mind, he would not have been so rich. We make our fortunes by our faults: to become wealthy, we must insist on our rights, be careful of our money, take advantage of others, go to law—things which, though not wrong, are not the best, nor the fit work of lofty minds. Where the treasure is, there is the heart also. Property narrows and weighs down the soul. The bird is more active than the snail, which drags its shell after it.

But there is another Franciscan idea which is truer still: it is the principle that spiritual things are not to be bought. The disproportion between those things and any price that could be paid for them is such that they would still be given, not purchased. With her exquisite tact in spiritual things, the Church saw this. She does not admit that she is ever repaid. Though wealthy, she calls herself poor, because, if all the world were offered her, she would still say it was not enough. Men devoted to noble professions will never admit that their work is paid for. I was told in my childhood that, in the times of the pirates, the Breton seamen used to come home from their heroic expeditions laden with gold. But, despising booty

which would have made mercenaries of them, those proud men invented a peculiar pastime. They made their gold pieces red-hot, and then threw them into the street, amused at the efforts made by the mob to get hold of them. Having the glory, they abandoned the profit to the coarser natures which it suited.

We, whose lot it is to drag on our lives in the mud of a submerged Atlantis,* may draw from these grand dreams of a vanished heaven a true, a deep, an *inward* consolation. Let us picture to ourselves the first Chapter of the Order, those five thousand mendicants in huts made of straw and boughs from the trees at the foot of the mountain of Assisi, and the amazed bystanders exclaiming: 'Yes, this is indeed the camp of God!' Or, better still, the distribution of the great indulgence of the Portiuncula. From the first stroke of the vesper bell on the first of August until the vespers on the following day, the crowd pressed, half stifled under the burning sun, to cross the little chapel and obtain the *full pardon*. 'My good people,' the Dominicans would say, 'why do you expose yourselves to this heat, to this fatigue? The indulgence you are promised is not so great as you are told, and the Minorites cannot show the pope's license.' That was true; the pope

* Atlantis is said to have been an immense island outside the Pillars of Hercules, once the seat of a mighty empire, the degeneracy of whose inhabitants Jupiter punished with the total submersion of their country.

never gave any written authority to Francis 'Christ is my advocate,' the holy man used to say, 'and the angels are my witnesses!' In the evening an old woman died; she appeared to the pilgrims, and said: 'By virtue of this indulgence, I entered straight into Heaven.'

The beauty of the Franciscan legend is its having sprung in its entirety from the popular conscience without ecclesiastical intervention. It is the glory of Italy that her people are polished in speech, refined in taste, and of exquisite tact, able to inspire beautiful things, to help to produce them, to appreciate them. Next to Christianity the Franciscan movement is the greatest popular work recorded in history. We trace in it the simplicity of men who know nothing but nature on the one hand, and what they have seen and heard in church on the other, and mix all this together with the utmost freedom. We find ourselves a thousand miles removed from scholasticism. Francis of Assisi is almost the only man in the Middle Ages who was never tainted by that leprosy, whose mind was never infected by the subtleties of the schools. He had no more theological instruction than the humblest believer. He preached from the abundance of his heart; if he found that words were wanting, he would give the people his blessing and dismiss them. Once, however, when he had to preach before Pope Honorius and his cardinals, he carefully studied his discourse and learnt it by rote. He

had scarcely begun when his memory failed him. He then abandoned the sermon he had so carefully prepared, began to improvise, and found much more impressive words. He gesticulated with his hands and feet as though on the point of taking flight; yet it never occurred to anyone that he was ridiculous, although his friend, the Cardinal of Ostia, was silently praying that the simplicity of such a man might not bring him into contempt.

As an Italian, he possessed that instinctive ability which accomplishes without effort the most difficult undertakings. Again and again we wonder that he did not come into fatal collision with the narrow orthodoxy of his time. His meekness disarmed everyone. Moreover, when a certain degree of holiness has been attained, heresy is impossible; for at a certain height dogma no longer exists, and there is no ground for controversy. His relations with Innocent III. are represented by his biographers in different ways, but all do honour to his judgment. Associations similar to his—that of the 'Pauvres de Lyons,' for instance—had been harshly repressed. Religious mendicity, outward austerity, were features which called to mind the Cathari, and excited to the utmost the suspicions of the higher clergy. Marvels of honest simplicity were required to avoid striking on that rock. As for the mighty of the world, Francis never knew them. His policy was most simple. He sometimes dreamt of seeing the emperor. 'I should ask him,' he said, 'for the love of God and

for love of me, to publish an edict against catching my sisters the larks, or doing them any harm, and ordaining that on the holy Christmas night he who has an ox or a donkey shall take special care of it, and also that the poor shall then be abundantly fed from the table of the rich.'

In his hands everything took a poetical and concrete form. He lived in that state of mind which creates those primitive images which serve as the basis of language and mythology. On a winter night, one of his disciples saw him enter his garden and make figures of snow, saying to himself: 'Here: this big one is thy wife; these two are thy sons; these others are thy daughters, and these thy man-servant and thy maid-servant. Make haste to clothe them, for they are perishing with cold. But if that is too much trouble for thee, be content to serve the Lord.' All this is thousands of years old. For him every idea became a little drama; each of his sensations took bodily shape and received a sort of external realization.

His followers were like him—slightly unorthodox, very untheological; they were beggars, unsuccessful poets, women, converted brigands, outcasts of all kinds. They were all of a jovial humour, and used sometimes to indulge in fits of wild mirth, like a holy carnival. Francis cherished principles which did not allow much severity in the choice of his disciples. He was too kindly to be suspicious, or to have what is called know-

ledge of the world. He made thieves and honest men equally welcome. As a rule, the thieves, touched by his kindness, became saints; but sometimes their natural propensities reappeared. Francis often put confidence in unworthy persons. We know the history of that Elias of Cortona who was his confidant and successor. He was an intriguer who, both before and after the saint's death, played a most equivocal part. Francis had a regard for him, just because he was so unlike him. Elias was a consummate politician and an able administrator. The holy man, dazzled by the qualities in which he was himself deficient, made Elias his right hand, and his last blessing rested on the head of an impostor, who gave a very strange direction to the pious work. It is true that without Elias it is questionable whether it would ever have succeeded. It was he who brought the too lofty ideal of the founder within the limits of possibility, and accommodated it to human weakness. The first rule, written by Francis's own hand, and which was believed to be an inspiration received by him on the mountain, enforced absolute poverty. This did not suit Elias. He destroyed the manuscript, of which he was the guardian, and pretended to have accidentally lost it. He represented that element of charlatanism without which (such is the stupidity of men) it seems that no great popular cause can prosper. M. Hase thinks, and I am quite of his opinion, that the stigmata, which entitled St.

Francis to an exceptional rank in the Christian heaven, were invented by Elias.

The discussion relating to the stigmata is perhaps the most interesting part of M. Hase's book. This miracle, the greatest in the history of the mediæval Church, is also remarkable for being attested by contemporary witnesses. Not only is it referred to by Thomas de Celano, the 'Three Companions,' and St. Bonaventura (though with important variations); not only is it mentioned in passages from writers not belonging to the Order, whose authenticity cannot be doubted, and which were written only five or six years after the saint's death, but we have also a decisive document. Elias, who for the last six months before the death of St. Francis never left him for an instant, in whose arms he expired, and who from that moment ruled the Order in his stead—Elias, almost in the presence of the corpse, wrote a circular letter to inform the brethren in France of the patriarch's demise. In that document, which was preserved in the Convent of Valenciennes, and which Wadding transcribed from a copy, Elias speaks of the 'new miracle that took place on the body of the saint a short time before his death,' and describes the miracle conformably with the other texts, though rather more timidly. It is, therefore, impossible to think here of a legendary elaboration, a tardy rumour arising from the wish to conform the life of Francis of Assisi to that of his divine model. No: on

the very day of St. Francis's death, his stigmata were spoken of. There is no proof of their having been mentioned previously, so that we are almost compelled to conclude either that Elias invented the whole story, thinking that it would only reach Assisi after the interment of the body, or that he himself inflicted the sacred marks on the corpse, which was left a whole night in his care.*

This second hypothesis is not devoid of probability. Immediately after death the body was seen at Assisi by thousands of persons: for many years it was the chief object of interest to Umbria, to the popes, to the whole of Christendom. It would have been very dangerous to rest such a belief on a fact capable of being contradicted. It is certain that the interment of the corpse was singularly hurried; the saint died on the Saturday evening, and on the Sunday morning his body was carried first to the Convent of Santa Clara, and then to the Cathedral of Assisi. Contrary to Italian custom, the coffin was closed; it had to be opened to enable Clara and her virgins to kiss the patriarch's hand, through the little window where the nuns receive the Holy Sacrament. The sequel is still stranger. On the removal of the remains, which took place on Holy Saturday in the

* Doubts arose as early as the thirteenth century: '*An pia fuisset illusio, sive suorum fratrum simulata intentio.*' These words may be read in the 'Légende Dorée' of Jacques de Voragine.

year 1239, to their final resting-place in the great basilica at Assisi, built for that purpose within the three years and a half following the saint's death, we see again the hand of Elias. That artful personage seems to take precautions lest anyone should see the corpse. The people wanted to know, at any cost, if, as it was affirmed, the body really preserved its appearance of life; they were still more anxious to touch the stigmata. This was forbidden; the refusal occasioned a fearful riot, for which Elias was held responsible. It is a tradition in the Order that Elias carried off the corpse, and buried it secretly in a part of the church to be known only to the General. This prompt and strange disappearance leads us to suppose that there was some powerful reason for withholding the holy man's corpse from the sight of the public. What seems most probable is that the body bore marks which, with a little credulity, might pass for the sacred stigmata, but which would not have borne a close examination. Many circumstances confirm this supposition. A few days before his death, the saint had to undergo cauterization. It was then that he exclaimed, 'My brother fire, the Lord made thee useful and beautiful; be thou gentle to me in this hour.' It is quite possible that traces of these cauterizations, found by Elias on the corpse, suggested the fraud to him, and saved him the trouble of committing it with his own hands. If it is true that the Church of the Portiuncula

possesses the saint's heart, the wound in the side also finds a natural explanation in the operations which must have been performed after death.

We ought to read in M. Hase's work the imposing legends which constantly arose from that strange tomb. Underneath the two splendid churches raised one upon the other, Umbrian imagination built a third, yet larger and more beautiful. There, in his doubly subterranean shrine, surrounded by lighted tapers, St. Francis awaits the day of judgment. He stands on the marble altar, untouched by corruption; his hands crossed, his five wounds dripping with blood. With eyes raised to heaven, he prays for men.* Some privileged persons, who were at prayer in the lower church, warned by earthquakes, saw the ground open, and were enabled to descend. Wild stories were spread abroad. Paul V. forbade, on pain of excommunication, all search for the holy tomb. In 1818 this wonderful legend was destroyed. The General of the Franciscans, authorized by Pius VII., caused excavations to be made. The

* 'He lies there under the great altar, as tradition tells us, but no one knows the precise spot of his grave; and a mysterious legend has crept about, whispered in the twilight for ages, that far underneath, lower even than the subterranean church, the great saint, erect and pale, with sacred drops of blood upon his five wounds, and an awful silence round him, waits, rapt in some heavenly meditation, for the moment when he, like his Lord, and with his Lord, shall rise again.'—Oliphant's 'Francis of Assisi.'—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

skeleton of St. Francis was said to have been discovered in a stone sarcophagus, under the high altar. The splendid ideal cathedral was then shattered like a glass, and a miserable little subterranean chapel in the worst style took its place.

Who will give us a complete account of the first century of Franciscan history? No popular revolution was ever subjected to more regular laws. We should see, after the death of the saint, his mission rent asunder, if I may say so, by two contrary parties: the one faithful to the master's ideal, anxious to regenerate the world through poverty, ending in 1254 in the bold attempt of the 'Eternal Gospel,' and whose chief representatives are John of Parma, Pierre-Jean d'Olive, Ubertin de Casas, Frà Dolcino, and Michel de Césène; the other, more worldly, more easily controlled, and more speedily enlisted by the Court of Rome. Two things, then, appear to have originated with St. Francis: first, a religious Order, which did more evil than good; secondly, a fermentation of popular thought, which gave birth to most of the innovators of the second half of the Middle Ages. In many respects the exalted Franciscan school was a forerunner of the Reformation; Friar Elias, Michel of Césène, Marsile of Padua, practised in many cases the policy of John Huss and Luther. Like them they invited German princes to reform the corrupt church, and appealed to civil society against the papacy and the episcopate.

But the development of these ideas would carry us too far. We thank M. Berthoud for his attractive little volume, which gives us a complete picture of the 'Pater Seraphicus;' and we hope he will keep the promise made in his preface of giving us also in French M. Hase's work on St. Catherine of Sienna. The religious history of the Middle Ages, whose original documents have long since been brought to light, will gain by such labours the enlightened criticism and nice appreciation which has hitherto been wanting to it.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

A MONASTIC IDYL OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

CHRISTINE OF STOMMELN.

THE learned philologists who, in our own time, have endeavoured to experiment upon the ill-defined limits of the body and the soul, have justly perceived how much light could be thrown on their researches by the study of religious enthusiasm. When attentively read and placed in the broad light of recent discoveries, the legends of ecstatics and accounts of *possession* receive most striking confirmation, or rather, most conclusive commentaries. The facts which they relate have been observed, analyzed, almost reproduced at will. Of all mediæval mystics, Christine of Stommeln is perhaps the one whose life best lends itself to this kind of study. We possess her correspondence, and the diary of her trials. The good faith of these is beyond suspicion. The patience of the Bollandists,* who devoted three hundred folio pages to these chimeras, enables us to follow in its most minute

* 'Acta SS. Junii,' vol. iv., p. 270 and fol. Compare Quétif and Echard, 'Script. ord. Præd.,' i., p. 407 and fol.

details one of the most peculiar pathological cases contained in the annals of hallucination, and to realize at the same time how the soul may combine the most pious sentiments and the strangest delusions.

The visionary of whom we now speak was born in the year 1242. Her parents were well-to-do peasants in the village of Stommeln, about fifteen miles north-west of Cologne. Her father's name was Henry Brusius, her mother's Hilla. The house where she first saw the light is still extant, and still bears the name of *Brusius-Haus*. She never learned to write, and could only read her Psalter, from which she seems to have acquired some knowledge of Latin; she understood that language when it was read slowly.* Her life did not differ essentially from that of many other saintly women in whom ardent devotion and an excitable temperament produced visions, extraordinary sensations, or stigmata. From her earliest years, she, like St. Catherine of Sienna, contracted a mystical union with him whom she used to call 'her most sweet, most dear, most tender spouse.' She was subject to devout trances, ecstasies, convulsions, spasms, which lasted a long time. She saw Jesus Christ, fancied she felt his hand resting on her, and remained for days under the impression of that contact. After hearing

* 'Rogo ut ea quæ Christinæ exponitis ponderetis, ut possit intelligere ea quæ dicuntur.'—'Acta SS. Junii,' vol. iv., p. 418.

certain German canticles, she would swoon for hours.

Her patience was soon put to strange proof. Demons got possession of her, subjected her to most atrocious tortures, filled her imagination with hideous images, made her most frightful suggestions. Father Papebroch wrote a long dissertation to show that this was not an unusual occurrence, and that it often pleased God to subject His elect to severe trials. Christine remained immovable. She suffered a martyrdom without parallel. All the pain of Jesus Christ's passion seemed renewed in her person. Plunged into uninterrupted meditation on the sufferings of Christ, she felt every detail of that appalling tragedy. The most characteristic of those details —stigmata on the hands and feet—soon showed themselves. Ever since the companions of St. Francis of Assisi thought it incumbent on them to raise the reputation of their master's holiness by that strange imitation of Christ, stigmata were looked upon as the mark of the highest sanctity. Pierre de Dace, of whom we shall shortly speak, confessed he dreamed of them from his childhood. Half a century earlier, a visionary from St. Trond en Hasbain, bearing the same Christian name, and surnamed Mirabilis, originated another order of ideas: the possibility of descending into purgatory and into hell to share the torments endured there. It is more than probable that Christine of Stommeln was aware of

the reputation of her predecessor, made famous by Thomas de Cantimpré. She, perhaps, was indebted to her for her name, having been born, it was said, on her fête-day, and she hoped to inherit the supernatural privilege by which Christine Mirabilis was enabled to bear the purgatorial pains of those she loved. But in her immoderate use of that privilege, Christine of Stommeln surpassed the saint whom she took as a model, and who had been less lavish of such self-devotion.

Her pretensions were at first unwelcome to her family, especially when, acting upon the rights given her by her precocious holiness, she left the parental roof to lead in Cologne the wandering life of a mendicant, which, but for the especial protection of heaven, would have been full of dangers. She was equally misunderstood in a convent which she had joined. They called her insane, and smiled at the strange trials to which she was subjected by demons. Certainly in these days her wonderful diary would be classed among the records of nervous diseases. Those hideous visions, those alternations of heavenly joy and profound sadness, those temptations to suicide, those attacks of catalepsy, those total perversions of the senses of touch, ending in the most horrible sensations—illusions which she mistook for realities—are all the symptoms of diseases now classified and carefully studied. The unfortunate girl who was subject to these paroxysms would doubtless have remained unknown, had

she not, like St. Catherine of Sienna, and like Catherine of Emmerich in our days, met with a person of talent, able to interpret her feelings and create her reputation.

This was a young Swedish Dominican, a native of the Island of Gothland, and who, according to the custom of the time, was called 'Petrus de Dacia.' Like nearly all young friars at that period, his superiors sent him first to Cologne and then to Paris to study theology. He was a dreamer, inclined to what he himself terms *acedia;* although very pious, he found monastic life oppressively sad. Constant meditation on the passion of Jesus Christ, the anguish of the Virgin, the sufferings of the martyrs, produced in him habitual melancholy. He sought for a soul in harmony with his own, and which would realize his ideal of holy suffering. On December 21, 1267, he saw Christine for the first time, and that day decided his whole life. The feelings of joy and consolation he then experienced, the ardent devotion with which he was filled, appeared to him supernatural. He felt himself thoroughly changed. He marvelled at the miracles which he believed he saw. He was touched by the young girl's pensive and wandering looks. Christine was friendly and at her ease with him. She called him by his name, and from the first took him as her spiritual brother, treated him with perfect confidence, and freely accepted his help. He spent the night near her. The pity he experienced on seeing her

blood flow and her wounds re-open increased his love. He encouraged her by setting before her the example of the saints. Twice the sufferer took from beneath her clothes a blood-stained nail to which a fragment of her flesh clung. She gave the young monk one of these nails. Peter preserved it as a relic, on which both his eyes and his heart were fixed. 'O felix nox!' he exclaimed; 'O beata nox! . . . O dulcis et delectabilis nox, in qua mihi primum est degustare datum quam suavis est Dominus!'

When he returned to his convent at Cologne, Peter still dreamt only of what he had seen at Stommeln. He used to curse the night he had spent there for being called 'nox'—word of ill-omen—'eo quod oculis noceat;' it should have been called day. As the Virgin conceived the Son of God in the night, so he in this night conceived God. He spent the following Christmastide in a sort of ecstasy.* His soul was so full of the image of Christine, that no longer could he think of God without thinking also of her. His reading of the Scriptures only furnished him with texts relative to his passion: 'Nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis. . . . Dies quam fecit Dominus, exultemus et lætemur in ea.'

Peter naturally seized every opportunity for again meeting the spiritual friend who had

* 'Quasi parturiens fui, nihilque tunc libentius fecissem quam quod tunc cum persona prædicta fuissem. Æstimabam enim eo citius illud in fructum pullulaturum, si fuisset calore genitricis confortum.'—'Acta SS.,' vol. above quoted, p. 282.

touched his heart. Those opportunities were frequent. The Dominicans of Cologne often used to call at the village of Stommeln, which was in some sort under their religious jurisdiction. Peter never absented himself from one of those visits. On February 24, 1268, he again saw the person who had left on him such a deep impression. This was one of her quiet intervals. The *curé* invited her to dine with him. Except in her hours of trial, Christine appears to have been a pleasing young woman, simple, smiling, amiable, innocent, graceful in her movements.* Her religious garment, composed of a long veil in which she was wrapped from head to foot, became her well. Poor Peter was more charmed than ever, and his enthusiasm inspired him with a poem which is surely one of the most peculiar compositions that could be quoted. The author felt obliged to write a commentary on it himself, and to give ingenious philosophical, theological, and mystical interpretations of every word.

This visit was followed, in the course of 1268 and the first months of 1269, by several others, whose details were carefully recorded by Peter. His accounts are extremely frank. In allowing himself to profess the tenderest sentiments for his spiritual companion, Peter evidently did not suspect for a moment that he was failing in his duty. On her part, Christine showed the fullest confidence in the young monk. She was then living

* 'Decenter affabilem et religiose jucundam.'

with her family, and often used to go to Cologne to gain indulgences and see her friend.' Whenever Peter and his companions came to Stommeln, the *curé* used to summon Christine; sometimes the monks were even invited to the farm where her father lived. She used to pour water over the hands of the guests and to wait upon them; as for Peter, he used to spend the days and nights beside her, praying with her, answering her pious questions, sometimes explaining to her the hierarchies of Dionysius Areopagite, and at other times the degrees of contemplation of Richard de Saint-Victor. During her ecstasy he used to lay his hand on her, to count her sighs, to measure her breathing. These two innocent souls related their dreams to each other, and stimulated each other's enthusiasm. There is a touching account of a walk* they took together, in the course of which Christine asked him the most simple questions.

Peter's companions, nearly all Swedes like himself, took no less pleasure in these visits. As we have said, the Preaching Friars at Cologne had much intercourse with Stommeln. Hence arose a little Dominican society, composed of Christine, the curate of Stommeln, his sister Gertrude, who sang hymns very sweetly, a few pious women in the dress of the *Béguines*, and the venerable Geva, Abbess of the Convent of St. Cecilia at Cologne, whose country-seat lay at Stommeln. Peter took

* 'Acta SS.,' vol. already quoted, p. 287.

pleasure and showed some skill in describing these different personages. The one he prefers, next to Christine, is evidently her intimate friend, Hilla van den Berghe. He greatly extols the serenity which filled her mind, the youthful innocence which surrounded her. 'Her gaiety,' he says, 'was serious, and her seriousness full of gaiety. . . . After Christine, I never saw a young girl of greater purity; it seemed to me that she did not know how to sin, and God is my witness that I never saw in her any levity of manner or speech, though I have lived with her often and long together, on terms of the greatest intimacy.' Old Aleida, who had lost her eyesight through weeping, was a model of patience. The Abbess Geva, always surrounded by young ladies of birth whose education she superintended, was on the best of terms with the members of the Order of St. Dominic.* They formed a devout coterie in which the utmost cordiality reigned, and of which Peter may be said to have been the soul. The pious women loved to hear him discuss the most difficult theological points, comment on religious canticles, or explain by means of the circles of Ptolemy the hymn used at the maidens' service, 'Post te canentes cursitant.' Geva had never heard a theological controversy. One day she asked Peter and his Italian companion, Aldobrandini, to argue the following question: 'To whom did Jesus give the most important trust—

* 'Mater quasi fratrum erat.'

to St. Peter, to whom He left the care of His Church, or to St. John, to whom He confided His mother?' Aldobrandini, who belonged to St. Peter's patrimony, pleaded in favour of the chief of the Apostles; the Swede contended for St. John.

The Minorites, as might have been expected, decried the little society to which they were not admitted. They did not even refrain from calumny, and their malice against Christine was expressed in all sorts of ways. Though she never belonged to the Order of St. Dominic, even as a tertiary, she was nevertheless affiliated to it by letters of fraternity; her confessors and her confidants were members of the Order; she, therefore, was *virgo devota ordinis Prædicatorum.*

This intercourse, which evidently made all the happiness of two simple minds, furnished Peter with pictures strikingly truthful, and which would have a charm of their own if shockingly realistic details did not too often intrude upon spiritual effusions, to which, at times, one feels inclined to say:

'Fallit te incautam pietas tua.'

The tender affection of these saintly persons, the *naïveté* with which they describe their pleasure in being together, the rare qualities which render them amiable to each other, and the little presents they exchange, make it all the more painful to read the passages devoted to the attacks of the devil, which are invariably ridiculous, and which

show an utter want of both taste and tact in the good Peter. It is astonishing to learn that so faultless a young girl as Christine should have imagined such horrible things. Sometimes it is a loathsome toad she feels slowly creeping under her garments, and sticking its claws into her flesh; she drives it off; the reptile drops on the floor with a noise like the fall of an old worn-out boot. At other times she fancies her food changed into spiders or toads; she feels the creatures cold in her mouth, and vomits them forth. On various occasions she thought a snake was crawling into her body and devouring her. Once, this hallucination lasted for eight whole days, which seemed equal to purgatory. The most shocking of those episodes is the one which brought Peter of Dacia to Stommeln for the ninth time. No pen could now be found to transcribe those pages which the good old Bolland has copied with a firm hand. Other trials, of a still more delicate nature, are narrated with the greatest simplicity. In these souls, ignorant of modern refinements, the purest thoughts were allied with expressions which would now be unpardonably coarse.

Christine usually concealed her stigmata, and expressed annoyance when they were spoken of. Peter was anxious to see them, and took advantage of the occasions when the hands of his friend appeared from beneath her veil to steal a glimpse of them. They generally presented the appearance of red scars, of the size of a penny-piece,

superficial and varying in width. Sometimes they resembled red crosses ornamented with flowers; sometimes they formed a cross from the arms of which sprang two smaller ones. Sometimes also the palm of the hand exhibited round the central wound fifteen red spots, symmetrically arranged. Her feet showed similar wounds, which bled frequently. Lastly, her forehead and her heart presented also the bleeding impression of the wounds of Christ. At the sight of these wonders Peter's devotion used to break forth in tears and enthusiastic exclamations, and sometimes he would resort to innocent frauds in order to procure for himself and others the spectacle which filled him with rapture. 'An inward feeling,' he says, 'assured me that the affection I bore to Christine came from heaven.' One day, when he supported her in his arms during one of her paroxysms, he had such a blissful sensation as he never before experienced.

These spiritual delights came to an end about Easter in the year 1269. Peter of Dacia was ordered by his superiors to start for Paris, there to pursue his theological studies. Echard says that there he very probably had St. Thomas Aquinas as his master. Be this as it may, Peter never for a moment forgot his friend during his sojourn in Paris. Thus arose a correspondence extending from the 10th of May, 1269, when Peter arrived in Paris, until the 27th of July, 1270, when he left. This correspondence forms one of the

most curious records which have reached us of the life of mystics in the thirteenth century. Preserved by Peter of Dacia himself, and by Christine's friends at Stommeln, then transferred to Juliers with her remains, it was copied at a later period by Bolland. At first Christine wrote through the pen of her confessor, Gérard de Griffon. No doubt she dictated in German. The Latin of these letters is simple, and quite different from that of Peter of Dacia. Such expressions as *mille bene valete* could not have come from so elegant a scholar as Peter.

The separation had been cruel. The first letter Peter wrote to his friend is touching, in spite of the affectation of pious rhetoric which disfigures it.* He hesitates to say what he feels, because he cannot express it, and perhaps, also, because he ought not to do so. The recollection of the past fills him with sadness.† He reminds her of the tears she shed at his departure. He regrets that he gave way to timidity, that he did not prolong his leave-taking from her, that he did not salute her more familiarly for the last time.

Christine's answers are full of tenderness.

* 'Carissimæ in Virginis filio virgini Christi Christinæ, in visceribus caritatis in Spiritu Sancto in æternum dilectæ.' —'Acta SS.,' vol. already quoted, pp. 299, 300.

† 'Quum mihi in memoriam venerunt dies præteriti in quibus in domo Dei ambulabamus, . . . quando interdum, licet raro et modice ab ubertate domus Dei inebriabamur et torrente voluptatis potabamur . . . . O commutatio lacrymosa, tædiosa, laboriosa.'—*Ibid.*

She had always hoped that his hands would lay her in the grave; she still had many confidences to make to him; her state is worse than ever; she never thinks of him without tears; she is confident of his being faithful to her; her only consolation is to listen to his letters, which she preserves carefully until his return. She cannot help feeling sad whenever she sees Brother Maurice, who accompanied Peter on his last visit to Stommeln. On that occasion she also could not express all that was in her thoughts; no one can ever fill his place in her heart. Above all, she implores him, for the love of God, if he should depart from this world, not to leave her long behind, an exile.

The fifth, eighth, ninth, and tenth letters are fine examples of mystical literature. Peter endeavours to prove that their mutual affection has and must have only God for its object. This mysticism does not forbid very ardent expressions. 'I cannot tell you all,' adds Christine, 'for you know how easily I blush.'* Peter rebukes her gently in these words: 'Conqueror vobis de absentia Dilecti,' which does not prevent his rushing into transports of metaphysical tenderness.†

Letters from Gérard and Maurice and from the

* 'Vobis sicut mihi est in corde non possum, propter erubescentiam quam scitis in me esse, intimare.'—*Ibid.*, p. 307.

† 'Hoc ideo dico quia non solum diligere sed et diligi me sentio. Conjicio enim de quo exierit caritatis fervore et quo continebatur verecundiæ virginalis pudore, ac si hoc sit quod dicitur: Absque es quod intrinsecus latet.'—*Ibid.*, p. 311.

curé of Stommeln are added to those of Christine and Peter, and increase their interest. Little presents, sometimes very simple, very personal, are exchanged between these pious persons. The amiable Hilla van den Berghe and the good old blind Aleida are often mentioned. Maurice tells Peter all the gossip of the *curé's* house. All this takes place under the eyes of the superiors, who, far from finding fault with it, never write to Peter but to give him news of her whom they call 'your beloved Christine.' Then Peter would redouble his attempts at fine writing, loading his artificial style with high-sounding phrases, but being truthful and edifying in spite of all. The last letter he wrote from Paris, on the state of his soul, is full of information respecting religious life in the thirteenth century. In Paris he found perfect models of piety; but he suffered from great dryness of soul. It was only when saying mass that he experienced any real joy: 'Tunc nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto; tunc redit et virgo. Heu mihi! dilectissima, quid dixi et quid nemimi!' This recalls what Fénélon said of St. Augustine: 'In him alone have I found one thing of which I will tell you: he is still touching even when sarcastic.'

About Easter, 1270, Peter was recalled by his superiors to Cologne. He was delayed on his way, and did not arrive at Stommeln till the 13th of August. At first he only intended to make a brief stay there, but it was prolonged, owing to

several incidents which he considered providential. The same simplicity and mutual confidence marked his relations with Christine. She used to provide for his expenses, and had saved up eight Cologne sous to buy him a tunic, of which he was sorely in need. The devil stole them. On the 29th September, Peter paid a last visit to Stommeln. 'Brother Peter,' said Christine, 'as thou art about to leave me, tell me a great secret. If thou knowest it, tell me the reason of our mutual affection.' Peter, taken by surprise, hesitated, and answered vaguely, 'God is the author of all affection and friendship.' 'No,' she said; 'I have doubts as to that answer. I wish to know if thou hast not received any warning, any special grace in this respect?' Peter was embarrassed, and still remained silent. Christine added, 'I know that the moment of our separation and of my desolation approaches—that is why I am about to reveal to thee a secret which, but for that, I should not have disclosed. Do you* remember how, when you came to see me for the first time, with Brother Walter, of pious memory, towards twilight, I had a cushion placed between you and me, upon which I reclined?'—'Yes, I recollect it.'—'At that time the Lord appeared to me. I saw my beloved, and I heard him say, "Christine, observe carefully the man beside whom thou art reclining, because he is, and will always be, thy friend.

* The singular and plural are thus interchanged in the original.

Know, moreover, that he shall be by thy side in everlasting life." This is, Brother Peter, the reason why I love thee and put such confidence in thee. I reveal this to thee now, though I never meant to do so, because we shall soon be separated; and I do not know whether we shall ever see one another again in this life. I therefore tell thee this that it may give thee consolation.'

Peter departed on the following day. All the little society of Stommeln started the good Swede on his way. The account he gives of the separation is very natural. His companion, a Swede like himself, was moved to tears. From that day he became Christine's devotee, and gave to her his rosary, which he had worn for four years.

Peter had often asked Christine to put in writing an account of her feelings and trials. She had complied, through the pen of the *curé* of Stommeln. On Peter's departure, she gave him the papers, and he took them away. These confessions, which the Swede intended as materials for writing Christine's life, have been preserved, and show that, in spite of her unsettled imagination, her soul remained pure.* The most curious page is that where Christine describes *de visu* purgatory and hell.† Her description is rather summary,

* 'Carissime pater, rogo vos, intuitu Dei et suæ passionis, quatenus ea quæ vobis narrare propono de amica vestra diebus vitæ meæ nunquam alicui homini reveletis.'—'Acta SS.,' same vol. as heretofore, p. 276.

† 'Malleos percutientes, caloris pænam et frigoris.'

and does not equal that of Christine de Saint-Trond, which has been regarded as a forerunner of the 'Divine Comedy.'

The journey to Sweden was long and difficult. It took place in the depth of winter, and the cold that year was intense. Two of Peter's letters have been preserved; one dated from Minden, the other from Halmstad, in the Halland. They are both beautiful, and make us much regret the loss of other letters written during the same journey. The sentiment they express is elevated; we find no trace of superstition in them. They deserve to be quoted as models of the ecclesiastical Latin of the thirteenth century, which has a charm of its own; a gentle sadness, or rather a melancholy gaiety fills them. Peter was credulous, though honest and affectionate. The promises of Scripture and the mystic joy of reciprocated love make him oblivious of the fatigues of the way. The two pious friends have but one wish: to die together, not to survive each other even by a day.

On his arrival in Sweden, 6th February, 1271, Peter was appointed lecturer at Skenninge (diocese of Linköping). He wrote many letters to Christine; but two years elapsed before he received one from her. Christine's letters had to pass through the Dominican Convent at Cologne, and were often, it seems, detained. Those of Peter were also much delayed; and to reach Stommeln, sometimes passed through Paris. At the Chapter of Aarhuus (1272), Peter

received at last four of his friend's melancholy letters. The *curé* of Stommeln acted as Christine's secretary at that time. She is now quite alone; for, though the brothers are full of kindness towards her, she has not found a heart like that of Peter, compassionate to her infirmities and understanding her confidences. She lives on his letters, which she has read to her constantly, and waters with her tears. The demon tempts her in the most dreadful manner. The greatest suffering she has experienced was when for eight days the evil spirit suggested to her this fearful thought: 'Brother Peter is dead; he has been killed by robbers.' In one of his letters Peter has dared to tell her, 'You will forget me.' Does he not know that Christine's sole hope is to share eternal life with him? If only she could write to him herself, and tell him secrets she can reveal to him alone. She is quite sure that she has all his heart.* Only on great occasions does she wear the dress he sent her; that dress must last all her life. He has been so kind to her! But now what a difference! 'I impose silence upon my mouth,' she says; 'for I find nobody like you—to tell the truth, I do not care to look.' During his journey she was constantly noticing the wind, thinking of his fatigues, of the

* '. . . Me solam esse vestri. Sed heu! dilectissime, non est sicut heri et nudius tertius, quando cum fratre Aldobrandino mecum in Ossindorp dignabanimi ire, exhibentes multam et acceptissimam consolationem.'

reception he would meet with. If she should live after his death, he must try to find a faithful friend for her, or, better still, ask of God that she may not survive him. To enter the kingdom of heaven together, leaning on her beloved—what a beautiful dream! If possible, he must visit her once more: unless he does, many wonderful secrets will remain unknown to everyone.

'Caro, cariori, carissimo fratri . . . Christina sua tota.' Such is the beginning of another melancholy letter, bearing date 1272. All her friends are dead or have left Cologne. Gérard de Griffon has been appointed prior at Coblentz. Her father has been ruined, and lives at Cologne in poverty; her mother broke her arm when going to see him, and nearly died. Christine is alone in the farm; the wounds in her feet prevent her wearing shoes; she is cold, and suffers much.

Peter consoles her; he calls her 'Cor suum et animæ dimidium,' and once more indulges in metaphysics. He too has sorrows; he meets with many difficulties in his Order. But God has given him new spiritual daughters, some of whom wear the habit of his Order; others that of the Béguines; others again lay dresses. One of them, seventy years old, is favoured with supernatural gifts. Another leads a life as full of suffering and ecstasy as that of Christine. She also sometimes displays stigmata and the signs of the passion. There is not the slightest trace of jealousy between those two saintly persons. 'She

resembles her father,' writes the Dominican, 'for she loves you intensely. She calls you her sister, because I told her you were my daughter.'* The Swedish ecstatic wishes to see Christine, and Peter hopes some day to see his three miraculous friends in the same Swedish convent. He dreams unceasingly of his paradise at Stommeln. Lost as he is in a wild country,† deprived of communication with the world, he feels lonely. He requests Christine to greet for him 'all the Hillas,' all his old friends.‡

Christine's misfortunes increase towards 1276. Her father dies; she becomes very poor; the world forsakes her; the farm has been sold; the house where they lived together is falling into ruins. She has no one to whom she can tell her secrets. Ah, if she could only reveal them to Peter before her death! Peter has invited her to enter a convent of Dominican nuns in Sweden. She dares not start until Peter advises her to do so by word of mouth. These sad tidings go to Peter's heart. At any cost he will see her; the year shall not close without his having had that happiness. She must come. He has six spiritual daughters, with whom she will live, and who will supply all her wants.§

* 'In hoc optime patrizat quod vos miro affectu diliget. Vocat autem vos semper sororem, eo quod dixi ei vos meam esse filiam.'

† 'In profundo terrarum.'

‡ 'Omnes amicos meos antiquos.'

§ His expressions are as burning as ever: 'Ut evidens

The house has come down at last (1277); the *curé* is dead; his mother accuses Christine of having misappropriated his property. Peter can no longer resist. It seems that, about that time, he had become lecturer in the island of Gothland, his own country, no doubt at Wisby (1278). 'Amor improbus omnia vincit,' he constantly says to himself, and in 1279 he obtains permission to revisit Cologne under divers pretexts, the chief being to obtain some of those relics of which the religious metropolis of Germany was the inexhaustible emporium. His health was weak, yet he, who usually swooned several times if he walked a mile, now performs an enormous journey without fatigue. The surprise he caused to the pious women at Stommeln by taking them unawares is cleverly described. It was the 15th of September, 1279, at the hour of mass. Many persons had already forgotten him; the wife of the bell-ringer asked his name and country. On hearing them, she rushed out, crying hastily, 'Christine, Christine, come quick!' Christine's delight, her ecstasy when, after vespers, Peter preached from a text she had herself selected, may be easily imagined. She came out of her ecstasy only to

mihi fiat quoniam germani sibi mutuo sint Christus et Christina, amicus et amica, spousus et sponsa ut in hoc certitudinaliter probem ex quo fonte procedat dilectio qua vos diligo et a vobis diligor. Carissima, æstimo quod dulcedinem consolationis quam littera vestra continebat solus sensit qui recepit, quia sola novit quæ misit.'

say twice, 'Let us love God for all His goodness.' She was then living with the Recluses or Béguines. She thought she must take certain precautions either because she wished to prevent slander, or because she was beset by one of her usual scruples, and affected, in her ecstasy, not to recognise her friend. 'Brother Peter,' said she, 'if thou wilt speak of God, it is well; if not, do what thou hast to do as quickly as possible and depart, otherwise we shall soon grow tired of thee.' This strange behaviour was much talked about. She pretended next day to have no recollection of it.

Peter remained three days with her, after which he went to visit his convent at Cologne. Gérard de Griffon was then sub-prior. He still loved Christine. She was the only subject of conversation between him and Peter. On the 30th of September, the latter returned to Stommeln; and the Béguines gave a great dinner,* at which all the confraternity was present. They spoke of the miracle of St. Agnes, as it is related in the 'Golden Legend,'† of the ring given and accepted by the image of the saint as a token of her mystical union. This greatly excited Christine's imagination. She asserted that a similar thing had happened to her. 'I am,' she said to Peter, 'going to tell thee a secret I never before revealed to any living being. From my childhood I knew thee in spirit; I could discern thy face and thy voice,

* Pulchrum prandium.

† Chapter xxiv.

and I loved thee so much that I often feared my affection might become a temptation to me. Never could I separate the thought of thee from the object of my prayers. I prayed for thee as much as for myself, and in all my trials thou wert my companion. Having long asked God if these feelings came from Him, I was assured that they did on the day of St. Agnes; because, during celebration, a ring was openly given me and put on my finger. And when thou salutedst me for the first time, I knew thy voice and distinctly recognised thy face. Many other proofs were divinely given me which modesty prevents my revealing to thee. For instance, I often received the distinct impression of a ring.' Indeed, the *curé* (then dead) had spoken of having seen that ring, not painted on the skin, but impressed into the flesh with various ornaments, sometimes in the form of a cross, sometimes with the name of Jesus Christ in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin characters. The schoolmaster testified to the same thing.

On the 21st of October, Peter returned to Stommeln for a farewell visit. He was literally laden with relics. The parting supper took place on the evening of the 24th. Christine was not so melancholy as usual; she even seemed gay. While saying her vespers under a tree, she had been assured by Christ Himself that Peter's journey would be safely accomplished. 'I have planted your mutual love in me, and in me will I

preserve it,' the Saviour added.* On the following day, after mass, they dined. Peter pronounced an address upon 'Convertere, anima mea, in requiem tuam, quia Dominus benefecit tibi,' and they parted, after recommending each other to God.

The letters begin again from that time. From Lübeck Peter writes three letters at least; one to Christine, another to John the schoolmaster, the third to Hilla van den Berghe. He congratulates the schoolmaster on the favour God has bestowed on him in confiding to him his tabernacle and his spouse. He compares him with St. John, to whom Mary was entrusted. With what delight, if the Order would allow it, would he change places with John! He begs to hear of all the marvels which John may witness. To himself, Sweden will be a land of exile; he will be like Adam driven from Paradise. His letter to Hilla van den Berghe is charming. He pays her a passing compliment on her virtue and simplicity.

From Calmar (January 3rd, 1280) Peter writes again to Christine, to John, and to the Béguines of Stommeln. The letter to Christine is more ardent in its mysticism than ever.† People evi-

* 'Ego amorem vestrum mutuum in me plantavi, et in me eum conservabo.'

† They both can say 'Diligo et diligor.' After in scholastic fashion putting to himself the question: 'Diligenda est ergo Christina?' Peter enumerates the reasons, 'quia expressa est Christi similitudo . . . In verbis ejus Christus auditur . . . In præsentia ejus Christi figura cernitur . . . In convictu

dently used to smile at his transports. 'Well,' he says, 'the world may rail at me, slander me, condemn me; it will not prevent me from loving the spouse of my God, from loving in her, her spouse, himself.'* There is no danger of his loving Christine more than Christ; for it is the rule that 'the cause of a thing is greater than the thing itself.'† Christine has led him to honour, to love, to enjoy Christ. Peter congratulates John on his having been appointed 'servant, secretary, and chaplain to the spouse of God.' It would have made him so happy to be chosen to fill even one of those offices!

Peter resumes his functions as lecturer at Wisby. Christine's letters in the years 1280-82 relate demoniacal trials still more cruel than before. John the schoolmaster is her secretary, and sometimes describes these strange occurrences in his own language. The demons torment Christine incredibly; one day they cut off her head, which does not prevent her from triumphing over them, and enduring purgatory for the *curé*. Far from combating these follies, the schoolmaster encourages her in what we can only call her madness.

ejus Christus sentitur, et (ut cuncta brevi verbo concludamus) ecce Christus in ea omnia factus est vel potius omnia fecit.' —'Acta SS.,' vol. already quoted, pp. 328 and fol., 416, 417.

* 'Clamet ergo mundus, irrideat, detrahat, irascatur et dehortetur, sponsam tamen Domini mei ex intimo corde meo diligam propter sponsum ipsum.'

† 'Propter quod unumquodque, ipsum magis.'

The poor girl has other more serious cares: she wishes to place* her brother Séguin in the Order of St. Dominic. Everybody is poor at Stommeln. The schoolmaster has lost his pupils; he is starving. He is about to be ordained priest; Peter must send from Sweden all the requisites for his first mass. Christine entreats Peter to come again. Nothing goes right without him at Stommeln. What is to become of her if the schoolmaster is obliged to go away? They are both thinking of leaving the country and joining the Dominicans in Sweden. The Dominicans of Cologne help them, though not willingly. Séguin enters the Order on the 29th of August, 1282; his admission required Peter's most active intervention. The schoolmaster and his brother are also very anxious to be admitted. But, in the eyes of the chiefs of the Order, practical reasons had more weight than the spiritual vocation of the candidates. 'They must learn some useful trade, without which their admission is very doubtful.'

Peter warmly encourages Christine's wish to start for Sweden. A Swedish gentleman, a friend of the Dominicans, had two sisters, who both wore the habit of St. Dominic. They were long the only nuns of the Order in Sweden. One of them was named Christine; she is dead. Let Christine of Stommeln come and fill her place. To remove all doubts, the good Swede writes to

Christine himself. Two sisters, both Béguines, offer to share their house with her. The Dominican convent is definitely founded. Peter redoubles his entreaties; Berthold, Prior of Wisby, joins in them. Christine has her prebend assured; she may wear what dress she likes, either the one she wears now or that of the Order. Peter had evidently succeeded in inculcating all his Swedish brethren with his ideas of Christine's saintliness. At Cologne, the Superiors seem to think that this canonization of living people is rather dangerous. One of the letters addressed to her from the convent bears a superscription which one might be tempted to suppose ironical: '*Christinæ in Stumbele, frater . . . salutem mentis et corporis.*' It is also noteworthy that Peter's letters are much more simply addressed than they used to be.

Peter, appointed Prior of Wisby in the close of 1283, obtains permission for Christine's brother to be sent to his convent. In 1285, he despairs of ever seeing her again; he has a fever. All communication is stopped, war having broken out between the island of Gothland and the Continent. In 1286 he again begins to hope. He tells Christine that he is about to start with his provincial for the general chapter to be held (at Bordeaux) in the following year. He will visit Stommeln on his way back. He hopes to be there about the 24th of June. His letter expresses some fears. The reserve Christine sometimes showed on his last visit had, it seems, weighed upon his heart.

It is more than probable that Peter made his journey to Bordeaux in 1287. On the 1st of June of that year we find him at Louvain. From that town he writes to his friends at Stommeln. This journey, undertaken to console them, has enfeebled him; he now wants them to console him. He limps badly with the left foot, his strength is exhausted; but all this does not prevent his hoping to see them in the course of the following week.

No doubt he carried out his intention, though we have no precise proof of it. As it is certain that he returned to Wisby, we can hardly suppose that he omitted to visit a spot which lay on his road and was so dear to him. The letter announcing Peter's death, written by Brother Folquin, his constant companion, and sent from Wisby to Christine, was found in the correspondence she left behind; but the date of the year is not given. Echard, who has corrected Papebroch's errors relating to this period, believes it was 1288. The good Folquin asks Christine to take him henceforth as her intimate friend* in Peter's place, and to confide all her secrets to him. We possess no more of these documents, stamped with such truthfulness in spite of the strange aberrations they relate. What Christine dreaded as the worst of all her trials occurred. She survived her friend many years, since she did not die till 1312.

Familiarem.

From the first, Peter intended to write a life of Christine, for the edification of the Christian world—partly as an eye-witness, partly compiled from her letters to him, and partly from the accounts sent him by the schoolmaster. A first attempt, a kind of preliminary book, entitled 'De virtutibus sponsæ Christi Christinæ,' was sent by him to Stommeln. The schoolmaster read it to Christine. It is a vague composition, scarcely intelligible, bearing no indication of time, place, or person, relating no more to Christine than to any other ecstatic, so that the Bollandists thought it useless to publish it. The most curious thing about it is that Christine did not recognise the portrait of herself. 'You must know,' says the schoolmaster, 'that I have read to her from beginning to end the part you sent me, in which you speak figuratively of your daughter Christine: she was wonderfully comforted by it, and listened with so much simplicity that she exclaimed in wonder: "But he never spoke to me of that person!"' John asks anxiously for the rest. Christine herself says that she had it read to her twice, and it gave her great pleasure. 'But what surprises me,' she adds, 'is that in all these years of intimacy, you never said one word to me of this girl, this friend.'*

* 'Et supra modum admiror, quum mihi tam multis temporibus familiaris fueritis, quare mihi de hac filia seu amica nunquam mentionem aliquam fecistis.'—'Acta SS.,' vol. above quoted, pp. 335, 337, 343, 418, 425.

Fortunately, Peter did not rest satisfied with this unsatisfactory attempt. He wrote a minute and accurate account of his visits to Stommeln, inserting all the letters at his disposal. This important narrative does not go farther than 1282.

In the meantime, by Peter's advice, John the schoolmaster, on his part, wrote a description of the marvels related to him by Christine, and which he believed he had witnessed. John had not Peter's high mind and purity of heart. He lived on the poor girl, and made capital out of a friendship which brought him into contact with a wealthy religious Order. The Bollandists had the courage to publish this tedious composition, which it is impossible to read, and painful even to glance at. In it Christine is subjected to the tortures of purgatory countless times.* Still more innumerable are the demons which beset her. Once the schoolmaster reckons their number at *trecenti et tria millia*, that is, three thousand three hundred. Papebroch writes in the margin 'three hundred and three thousand,'† which is too many. The tortures inflicted on her by serpents and toads are described with revolting realism. The account of the demon of the *acedia* is, however, not devoid of interest. A squalid demon appears to her; to his rags hang little phials full of poison. 'I am,' says he, 'the demon who entraps the greatest

* 'Acta SS.,' vol. already quoted, pp. 391, 392, 393, 394, 400, 454.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 348, 385.

number of monks. I pour over them the contents of my little phials, and, filled with dislike for religious life, their appetite for earthly things is excited. This has just happened to thy brother, Séguin.'

So long as Christine's sufferings are confined to herself there is nothing in them to surprise those conversant with the symptoms of nervous disease in women. The peculiarity of the illusions produced by such disease is to transform inward sensations into phenomena supposed to be external. But it is another thing when those strange stories relate to so-called facts, to events of the time. What are we to think, for instance, of the incredible story of seven brigands whom Christine is said to have converted by means of prodigies which are supposed to have been witnessed by the whole country? Psychological and pathological explanations no longer suffice to account for such stories, and we must confess that the dull conscience of those troubled times admitted a laxity in the matter of truth-telling which could not be tolerated by the enlightened and rigorous conscience of our days.

The schoolmaster's narrative ends in November, 1286, almost at the time when Christine received Peter's letter informing her of his intended journey in 1287. Very likely this news interrupted John's narrative. What could be the use of writing stories which Christine herself would soon be able to relate? If, as Echard believes, Peter revisited Stommeln in the summer of 1287, we must also

admit, with that learned critic, that he received from Christine and took to Sweden the manuscript dictated at his request and for his use.

Besides the letters given by Peter of Dacia in the account of his relations with Christine, several addressed to her are to be found in the Juliers manuscript. We have analyzed them, following, as much as possible, their chronological order. We will here point out a letter from Brother Aldobrandini, which, though written in the involved style of a student of rhetoric, is yet interesting, and gives a better idea than any of the others of the childish *naïveté* of the little society at Stommeln. A letter from Brother Maurice, dated Paris, deserves also to be quoted. The poor brother is quite lost in the house in the Rue St. Jacques. The change of diet has been very trying to him: 'I am now obliged to devour rotten eggs, given out more stingily than the eggs of Eifel which our brothers at Cologne eat. Oh! when I think of the fresh eggs and vegetables we used to eat, while, seated round the saucepan, we watched the meat boiling! How many times I go back in spirit to that Egypt of Stommeln! And my companions are like me: we would all go there in the body, even if Stommeln were ten miles farther from Paris than it is from Cologne!' He knows he is watched; he dares not avow the friendship he has for her, 'for fear of the Jews.'* He

* An allusion to the *propter metum judæorum*, often repeated in the Gospel according to St. John.

cautions her not to show his letter to anyone, lest, through ill-natured interpretations, it might bring a severe reprimand on the writer. He adds, in a postscript: 'Tell Dame Beatrix to prepare fresh eggs and cherry jam for the friars on their way back from the chapter, and to remember me, seeing that she is so well provided for amongst the Béguines.'*

We must also mention a letter from Brother Folquin, specifying the little presents he is sending from Sweden to Stommeln. They consist of horn spoons, some black, others white with black handles. A pious letter, addressed to Christine by a young English monk, shows that she inspired the same feelings in very different persons.

This collection of documents, in Christine's possession at Stommeln, passed, along with her body, into the hands of the Canons of Juliers. There Bolland copied them almost entirely; Papebroch published them in spite of their prolixity, and added to them another 'Life of Christine,' composed by a monk of the Dominican Convent at Cologne, between 1312 and 1325, perhaps in view of her canonization. This life does not throw any fresh light on the original papers. It merely informs us that the trials of the saint ended in 1288. According to the author, this coincided with an event famous in that country, the battle of Woringen, fought between Siffroi, Archbishop of Cologne, and John, Duke of Brabant (June 5, 1288). Christine's intercession

* 'Acta SS.,' vol. already referred to, pp. 410, 412.

influenced, they say, the issue of that battle; she saved the souls of many of the combatants by taking upon herself the torments they had deserved. After this she lived in perfect peace. The fact that she was then forty-six years old, and had probably heard of Peter's death, no doubt did more to cure her than the battle of Woringen. By his simple admiration, Peter unintentionally encouraged a state fatal to the recovery of his friend.

The volume of the Bollandists containing these curious records appeared in time for Father Echard to read them, and to submit them to acute criticism in the first volume of the 'Scriptores ordinis Prædicatorum.' He points out several erroneous suppositions into which Papebroch had been led by imperfect acquaintance with the private history of the Dominican Order.

Christine lived for twenty-four years in the exercise of a piety less extraordinary than that to which she owed her celebrity. The advanced age she attained shows that her excitable temperament at last grew calm. She died on the 6th of November, 1312. She was quietly interred in the cemetery at Stommeln, but soon a rumour of miracles performed by her intercession attracted attention to her grave. About 1315 or 1320, her body was exhumed and placed in the church at Stommeln. In 1342 it was transferred to Nideggen, on the Roer; and, about 1584, to Juliers, where it still rests in a little mausoleum

at the entrance of the choir. Her name is still held in veneration, although the first steps towards her canonization, taken shortly after her death, were never followed up. It was through the stigmata of St. Cathérine of Sienna that the Order of St. Dominic compensated itself for the stigmata of Francis of Assisi. Christine is commemorated, not on the anniversary of her death, but on the 22nd of June, perhaps the day when her remains were transferred to Juliers.

Christine's reputation for holiness scarcely extended beyond the neighbourhood of Clèves and Juliers. She has often been mistaken for Christine de Saint-Trond, who, being more widely known, may be said to have absorbed her namesake, as sometimes happens in hagiography. Thus the stigmata attributed to Christine de Saint-Trond are a sort of larceny from Christine de Stommeln. The Bollandists have proved that St. Christine de Saint-Trond was never known to exhibit stigmata. The designation of 'Sponsa Christi,' bestowed on both these holy women, led to other confusions.

In our time a 'Life of Christine' has been written by M. Wollersheim,* an ecclesiastic of the Diocese of Cologne. The principles of this biographer were nearly the same as those of Joseph Gœrres. He admitted the reality of the facts recorded in the Bollandists. He collated with the

* Das Leben der ekstatischen Jungfrau Christina von Stommeln.' Cologne, 1859, small 8vo.

original manuscripts several of the texts published by Papebroch, and often corrected them. He was unacquainted with Echard's observations; but, to the data of his predecessors, he added many particulars which could only have been obtained in Christine's native place.

M. Alfred Maury ranked the saint among the ecstatics and stigmatized persons, with whom physiology will henceforth associate her.* In future, poor Christine will probably be studied only as a patient. Yet, to do her justice, we must not forget her love-story. The human heart will always assert its rights. It triumphs alike over the coldest materialism and over the most unreal mysticism. Between the doctors who would stretch her on the rack of experiment, and the faithful who would place her on an altar, Christine, thanks to Peter of Dacia, remains an interesting study for those who love to search for the little flower in the half-frozen fjords of Norway, to discover the sunbeam in polar regions, the smile of the soul in the most melancholy ages, genuine emotion in the midst of the strangest delusions. There are times when the Loffoden Islands and the gloomy Archipelago of Tromsoë are as much to us as Ischia and Capri; no doubt their hours of beauty are infinitely more rare; but in those hours we feel that there is indeed in this world only one sun, one sea, one sky.

* *Revue des deux Mondes* of the 1st of November, 1854, essay on the 'Hallucinations of Christian Mysticism.'

RELIGIOUS ART.

THOSE who have pondered over the delicate problem of the intimate connection between art and religion, will read with much pleasure and profit the excellent pages in which M. Coquerel has, with unusual frankness, expressed the scruples of a liberal Protestant with regard to Italian art.* I do not believe a more just and accurate view of that difficult subject has ever been formed. Ardent piety does not necessarily imply sound taste; pure and lofty religious sentiments do not always accompany appreciation of the plastic arts. What charms us in M. Coquerel is the union of two qualities seldom found together: the spiritual religion produced by the teaching of the Reformed Churches in noble hearts and lofty minds; and the feeling for form which we are wont to consider an especial glory of the Roman Catholic Church, and which the peculiar conditions of its worship have, in fact, helped to develop.

The judgments of Protestants on Italy are gener-

* 'Des beaux arts en Italie, au point de vue religieux,' by Ath. Coquerel, jun., assistant minister of the Reformed Church of Paris. Paris, 1857.

ally very severe. Those of M. Coquerel have a sympathy, a broadness, a spirit of justice and tolerance, which leave impartial philosophy nothing to desire. No one could rise higher above sectarian prejudices, or regard beliefs he does not share from a point of view more truly Christian. Often, no doubt, M. Coquerel becomes critical; but criticism of great things always includes praise, and is, in a certain sense, only a tribute to their greatness. In art, as in the development of her political, moral, and religious history, Italy often touches the lowest depths; she is seldom mediocre; we hate her—and end by loving even her faults. She is truly the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse, who seduced the world; but where would the world have been but for the poison she poured over it?

The decadence of art is seen in Italy more emphatically than anywhere else; one might almost say that, without visiting Italy, we can form no idea of bad taste in full display and unchecked insolence. I never saw any church in Paris which could even suggest the architectural extravagance of Borromini, or the absurdities encountered at every step in the streets of Rome and Naples. Yet that bad taste is never vulgar; it always has character, and one grows almost to like it. I remorsefully remember having more than once caught myself taking pleasure in the *Gesù* and other edifices which my reason told me were puerile and meretricious. Italy is never either coarse or dull. Excepting in a few northern

towns, more or less subjected to French influence, everything there is alive and real, everything bears the impress of personality. No one, walking down our finest streets—the 'Rue de l'Université,' or the 'Rue de Varenne,' for instance—would dream of stopping to look at any of those gorgeous mansions which, in Italy, would be termed palaces In the streets of an Italian city, on the contrary, we are tempted to stop before each balcony and each doorway. The paintings or the sculptures they exhibit were not made merely because it is the duty of a great State to encourage art; the buildings were not erected only to employ so many masons. Everything has its own style; everything is either bad or good, because it is the work of an individual, and satisfies some real want.

Italy owes half, and perhaps the most durable half, of her glory to religious art. The schools of Sienna and Perugia, the domes of Pisa and Orvieto, anterior at least to a certain extent to the Renaissance, have often been quoted as expressing the ideal of purely Christian art. I might be reproached with hypercriticism were I to maintain that the productions of Italy in the Middle Ages (excepting of course those of Angelico da Fiesole) are more artistic than Christian in their tendency; and that the cathedrals of Pisa, Orvieto, and Sienna are perfect buildings in a worldly sense rather than stamped with a high religious ideal. I shall therefore confine myself, in order to avoid all appearance of paradox, to saying

that, generally, the forms given by Italy to Christian art scarcely satisfy all the various sentiments—the gravity, the sadness, the poetry, the morality—which northern nations introduce into their religion. We have only two conceptions of Christian art: the first takes the mediæval form, austere, sublime, in keeping with the faith of masses of men, rough and uncultured, though imbued with profound religious sentiment; the second takes the modern form, represented as yet only by a few illustrious examples, but destined to a great future (if anything is to have a future) —a form more abstract, more refined, corresponding less with a faith generally accepted and dogmatically defined than with individual sentiment. Never was the problem of religious art more completely solved than in the Middle Ages, in the sense that at no other period of the history of mankind did religion manifest itself in forms more imposing or coming closer to the Deity. The mediæval church is a living *whole*, like the cherub of Ezekiel, speaking in every particle of its being, breathing out through every pore the hymn of infinitude. Its porticoes, its walls, its floors, its windows, are an encyclopædia wherein we find the image of the world, the history of mankind and the secrets of the future. It has an outward voice—the bells, themselves sacred objects, bearing their own names, and having an almost baptismal consecration; it has an inward voice—the solemn chants issuing from many powerful throats;

it has its celestial court in the saints sculptured on its pillars, drawn on its cupolas and ceilings, painted on its windows; it has its hell in the terrible images blended with heavenly visions. Ugliness itself finds its place here as a dissonance necessary in the kingdom of God; it asserts itself in those inferior creatures who show their heads here and there, degraded, but made subservient to the triumph of beauty.

In our time, when religion has become so much more individualized, we cannot hope for such high harmony: outward pageants have little effect on us; architecture, which only lives by the multitude, cannot lay the foundations of a great future in beliefs which, when they escape from dry officialism, tend more and more to be confined within the heart. But music may find fit themes in religious emotion. And painting, above all, by interpreting religious symbols, and finding in them motives for lofty thoughts and grand sentiments, may elevate and purify the soul without theatrical display, without mystical refinements, and without archæological subtleties.

It is obvious that religious art, in the sense just indicated, is not to be found in Italy. Such art, the fruit of that refinement in thought and sentiment attained by cultured minds of late years, has a complex origin: Protestantism, philosophy, German idealism, the pure and noble feelings which in England have given rise to Unitarianism and other exalted forms of Christianity, have all contri-

buted to it; but Italy has had nothing to do with it. Did the great Christian art of the Middle Ages flourish better there? It is difficult to say. Italy never had a Middle Age; she remained ancient very late, and became modern very early; the sentiment of the infinite, the greatest acquisition made by mankind during its thousand years of slumber, does not exist for her. Excepting at Milan and Naples, Italy has no important structure which can be called Gothic; and that name itself is to her synonymous with barbaric.* The Duomo at Milan is an isolated structure; and, moreover, its exotic origin is seen in the cold and artificial air which characterises all imitations. Naples, owing to her Norman and Angevine dynasties, had some really Gothic buildings. But it is curious to see what has become of them. M. Vitet† shows by a curious instance how the architectural forms of a country will eventually prevail over those imposed upon it; how a Byzantine church with five cupolas, a regular copy of St. Mark of Venice, planted at Périgueux towards the close of the tenth century, has become a church without any external prominence,

* I have no doubt the word *Gothic*, whose origin has given rise to so many controversies, is Italian. The memory of Italy gave to all the barbaric destroyers of the Roman empire indiscriminately the name of *Goti; gotico* became thus synonymous with *barbaric; Gothic times* are barbaric times, and this is why the Renaissance in its contempt for mediæval edifices called them *gotici*.

† *Journal des Savants*, February, 1853.

heavily surmounted by a great double-storied roof. Naples did exactly the same. 'She took infinite pains and expended enormous sums in transforming Gothic into Italian churches. The graceful pillars which rose to the summit were encased in a thick coating of stucco, so as to form a heavy column of sham marble with a huge gilt capital. Pointed arches became round arches. The vaults in which the bold mediæval moulding used to be intertwined were concealed under a coloured ceiling or pretentious paintings. This is not the history of one exceptional church; it is the history of all the churches of the capital and the chief towns in the kingdom.' They say that Pius VII. in the same spirit admired nothing in Paris but the Virgin's Chapel in the Church of St. Sulpice, with its oppressively gorgeous decoration.

The fact is that Italy, even when Christian, is always classical and still a little pagan. The infinite displeases and wearies her. In this respect Rome usually surprises Catholics who bring thither their Northern imagination. Those massive walls and heavy ceilings, that absence of perspective and mystery, are painful to them. The papacy and the Roman Court, having become Italian after the great schism, had no stronger wish than to revert to ancient and purely Roman art, just as Arnold of Brescia and Colà de Rienzi, dreaming of a political part to be played by their country, had but one idea,—to recreate the senate and the

tribunes. All the Christian art of modern Italy has the effect to me of the Gospels translated into Latin verse; it is like the poetry of Prudentius and Sedulius. It is a strange mistake to suppose that Rome has preserved any tradition of primitive Christian art. It is now proved, for example, that the chants of the Sistine Chapel, which were supposed to bear traces of very ancient Christian music, are only an echo of the poorest dramatic music of the eighteenth century, inferior in antiquity as in taste to the plain song of our humblest villages.*

After the close of the sixteenth century, and the great reaction represented by the Council of Trent, Pius VI., and Charles Borromeo, Italian art, I know, suddenly altered its character; it became Catholic, or rather Jesuitic; but it was not at all more Christian. It was devoid of lofty ideas; Spanish materialism, in its revolting credulity, dominated it entirely. Do the canvases of Barbieri Guercino reveal any high conceptions of moral beauty? No; they are but the coarse assertions of an orthodoxy which crushes the object it would embrace, of a pious realism which must touch where it ought to be content with believing, and which, like St. Thomas, brutally thrusts its fingers into the wound. When entering the Gesù, or any of the Neapolitan churches, do

Vide M. F. Danjou's report in the 'Archives des Missions scientifiques,' published by the French Ministry of Public Instruction, November, 1850, p. 631 and fol.

we realize the dignity of humanity, or the infinite glory of God? Certainly not; all care for harmony and beautiful form has disappeared; it is no longer a question of ennobling and purifying the faithful who come to pray: the sole aim is to do honour to a material object containing the real presence of the Deity by a gorgeous pageantry similar to that surrounding Eastern potentates. Such a display would indeed have seemed puerile in mediæval churches, where God was not enclosed in a tabernacle a few feet wide, and where holy awe filled the whole edifice; but here God dwells in one particular spot, and as we approach that spot we require a *crescendo* of gorgeous ornaments, draperies, twisted columns, railings, canopies, etc.

M. Coquerel appears to me to have expressed with perfect justice this essentially materialistic character of what may be called *devout art*. Art is only at its ease when it is symbolic—reality oppresses and lowers it. But in modern Italy symbols are always taken for reality; they become direct objects of worship, and consequently exclude art. A statue is supposed to do honour to some sacred personage not by its beauty, but by its rich attire. Misled by the Spanish notions that saints and the Deity Himself are flattered by the pecuniary sacrifices made for them, believers lavish gold and precious stones upon it. The more massive a silver image is, the greater is the merit of the donor—masterpieces are valued by weight. This is why Naples, the most

Catholic city in the world, in the sense we have just indicated, is at the same time the least artistic: outside the museums one finds not a single work of any merit. The same phenomenon recurs wherever Catholic piety is predominant. The ultramontane school of our day, which cannot be accused of inconsistency, has declared that the works of the great masters are out of place in churches, and has given the preference to gilded statues, or pictures artistically worthless but more capable of exciting devotion. That certainly is not the sentiment which Raphael, Michael Angelo, or Titian excite in us. The productions of these great men, like all that is stimulating and elevating, elevate our opinion of human nature, raise man in his own esteem, and inspire him with a sort of proud freedom which is not precisely Christian piety. In a very interesting appendix, entitled 'Iconography of the Immaculate Conception,' with which M. Coquerel closes his work, there is a curious illustration of the errors into which a form of worship may fall by becoming more and more materialistic.—I speak of the directions given by two Belgian bishops as to the manner in which the new dogma is to be pictorially represented. If such rules had existed in Raphael's time, should we have had those charming Madonnas, so little orthodox, but so truly religious, inasmuch as they are the perfect expression of beauty?

I must not be accused of taking too seriously

harmless platitudes, appropriate even in their inferiority to the simple public, for whom they are destined. The coarse realism which corrupts religious art extends much further than is generally supposed. It has surprised and pained me to detect it in the last works of a man who did honour to art by the seriousness with which he treated it, and by the dignity of his character. Some time before his death, M. Delaroche wished to paint Scriptural scenes. Instead of seeking in those admirable subjects themes whose simplicity and grandeur would have conveyed a lofty moral, he endeavoured to depict the Gospels as he had depicted history; he worked on apocryphal anecdotes, he sought pathos in minute details and material objects. Instead of rendering the general sentiment of a scene, he dwelt on circumstances which had not even a traditional consecration—the Virgin in contemplation before the crown of thorns; St. Peter, on the return from Calvary, carrying the same crown, and similar subjects embodying only the materialistic idea of a 'relic.' Instead of the Gospel, he painted the Apocrypha, the visions of Mary of Agreda or of Catherine Emmerich. It is, no doubt, possible that in Christ's last hours there occurred scenes affecting from a purely human point of view; but for high art those do not exist. There is only one incomparable symbol, consecrated by mankind, adopted by everyone, and to which nothing may be added. Anecdotical painting applied to such subjects is a

profanation; yet in these days materialism so pervades religion that no one protested against the sacrilege, and almost everybody was weak enough to applaud it.

Artists must not be theologians. They must not invent dogmas for their own use, but rest satisfied with broadly interpreting old texts consecrated by faith. All which tends to give historical reality to those scenes for which we have a conventional standard ought to be deprecated. Archæology itself has its limits. For instance, I cannot forgive M. Vernet for having transformed the patriarchs of the Bible into Bedouins wearing the burnous. I will not cavil over details with that clever artist; I will not insist upon the circumstance that the burnous is not exactly the costume of Eastern Arabs, that neither the name nor the thing are often found out of Africa; I will forget that the Crimean Jews, whom M. Vernet says he took as models,* are, with the Jews of Abyssinia, almost the only Jews in the world who do not belong to the race of Israel. But I venture to regret that a grand and remote ideal should have been dwarfed to the proportions of *genre* painting. Like subjects taken from the Gospels, though in a less degree, subjects drawn from patriarchal history are consecrated by tradition; and it is far more important to give expression to the

* See a highly interesting pamphlet entitled 'Opinions sur certains rapports qui existent entre le costume des anciens Hébreux et celui des Arabes modernes' (Paris, 1856), p. 16.

sentiment or the idea attached to them, than to represent the manner in which the facts actually took place.

I should never end were I to utter all the reflections suggested to me by M. Coquerel's excellent book. Protestantism has often been taunted with want of artistic sentiment. This may have been true at certain epochs and in certain branches of the great Protestant family; but such a reproach can no longer be made general. M. Coquerel's book contains the purest, and for us the only possible theory of religious art. From theory to practice there is only one step; I have no doubt that the Reformed Churches of France will be able to take it. Every religion has had recourse to art in order to attain its aim of raising man to the comprehension of his celestial origin and his mysterious destiny. The zeal of the Iconoclasts may have been laudable, so long as it was feared that symbols might become objects of worship and excuses for superstition in the minds of ignorant people. Such apprehensions can no longer exist in the Reformed Churches, and M. Coquerel's book is the best proof that Protestantism has every essential for the development of a very noble art at no distant future.

THE CONGREGATIONS 'DE AUXILIIS.

AN EPISODE IN THE HISTORY OF THEOLOGY.*

DURING the last years of the sixteenth century, while Papists and Huguenots were cutting each other's throats in Europe, and Montaigne, the only sage of those days, was laughing at them both on his small estate in Perigord, a war, quite as desperate, though less bloody, was raging in

* The details contained in the following narrative are all extracts from the original documents, viz.: 1°. 'Acta omnia congregationum ac disputationum quæ coram SS. Clemente VIII. et Paulo V., summis pontificibus, sunt celebratæ in causa et controversia illa magna de auxiliis divinæ gratiæ, quas disputationes ego F. Thomas de Lemos, eadem gratia adjutus, sustinui contra plures ex Societate.' Lovanii, 1707, folio. 2°. 'Historia congregationum de auxiliis divinæ gratiæ' (by Father Serry, under the pseudonym of Auguste Leblanc). Lovanii, 1700, folio. 3°. 'Abrège de l'histoire de la congregation de Auxiliis.' Frankfort, 1687, without the mention of the author's name, to which is added: 'Brevis enarratio actorum omnium, ad compendium redactorum, quæ circa controversiam de auxiliis divinæ gratiæ,' etc., by Father Nugnez Coronel, secretary to the congregations. I have been unable to consult the history of the Jesuit Meyer. But I have compared the account of the two Dominicans with that given by the most orthodox church historians and those most favourable to the Society of Jesus.

Spain between the Jesuits and the preaching friars, under the rival flags of Bañez and of Molina. The cause of the contest was *physical predetermination*. Pray do not smile, reader; this quarrel was to inspire Pascal, to be the cause of Arnold's persecution, to destroy Port-Royal, and, for more than a century, to convulse Catholicism. The day may come when posterity will laugh at our struggles, just as we now laugh at the struggles of the past. And yet, after all, honour be to a century capable of a passion for abstract subtleties! No one will ever accuse our century of such an aberration.

I.

Predetermination, or *physical premotion*, the latest product of Scholasticism, that is to say, of that singular combination of credulity and presumptuous rationalism which was the snare of the human mind in the period of its decrepitude, was in reality only a supposititious child of St. Thomas. It originated with Bañez; but it was the name of the 'Angelic Doctor' that made its fortune, and attracted its crowd of followers. Adopted by a powerful Order, it became almost an article of faith. The Dominican Father Jacques assures us that the angels who rejected the doctrine of predestination, which had been put to them as a test, were turned into démons.* According to another author,

* 'Nova Cassiopeæ stella' (1st edition, Langres, 1667), chaps. i. and ii.

this dogma was the subject of the dispute between St. Peter and Simon the Magician, in consequence of which the latter avowed himself a heretic. It was also formally professed by Aristotle.* According to the Predestinarians, God forestalls the human will, and compels the action which appears to be one of choice. The freedom of man, under the direction of God, is like that of a pupil when being taught to write by his master, or of a child carried by a giant.† The common-sense of the laity may think that a hand guided by another deserves but little credit for writing well, and that the liberty of a child in the arms of a giant is rather limited. No matter; the Thomists affirmed positively that liberty and predestination could coexist. When they were asked how that marvel worked, they simply replied, 'O altitudo!'

At the same time that the new theory was gaining new disciples, terrible storms were raised against it. The Jesuit Montemajor, a theologian of Salamanca, was the first to draw the sword, and attack, in a solemn thesis, the creation of Bañez. The latter defended his work, and denounced to the Inquisition at Valladolid sixteen propositions taken from his adversary's thesis.

In those days it was a point of honour with the Jesuits that not one of their body had incurred theological censure. They all sided with Monte-

* Lemos, 'Acta,' col. 1049-1059.

† *Ibid.*, col. 1108.

major. War was declared. Theologians were already flocking round the two champions, when a great event complicated the quarrel, and enlarged its proportions. In 1588, the Jesuit Molina published his celebrated book, 'The Concord.' I am not joking when I call this a great event. How many masterpieces, how many books full of life and truth have made less noise than this theological quibble! What fruitful ideas have been buried in oblivion, while for nearly two centuries attention has been thrown away on a mediocre book, which troubled the lives of thousands, disturbed whole countries, and engrossed the minds of statesmen. Ah! it was a fine thing to be a theologian in those days.

Molina's object was to substitute 'simultaneous concurrence' for 'predetermination,' 'mediate knowledge' for 'absolute foreknowledge,' and 'sufficient grace' for 'efficacious grace.' Few persons now take the trouble to find out whether they are Thomists or Molinists. However minutely we examined ourselves, we never observed that we were predetermined to an action from without; and, as for simultaneous concourse, we are also weak enough to believe that when we act we act alone . . . But, God forgive me! this is called, I believe, being a Pelagian.*

* 'Members of that society (Jesuits) held and asserted very generally towards the end of the sixteenth century, that the human will possesses a faculty of disposing itself to make a

It is certain that Bañez was furious when he héard that Molina had dared to seek and find a system of his own. A sceptical century like ours can scarcely understand the anger of a theologian of the old school. Except in politics, we have forgotten how to get angry, and many people think that we are not angry enough even about politics. Bañez denounced Molina's 'Concord' as heretical before its publication. But the wind was favourable. *Scientia media* and *sufficient grace* became as fashionable as predestination had been. Molinism was defended in public theses at Sarragossa, at Toledo, at Seville, at Granada; in France, in Lorraine, and in Germany. When censure was dreaded, the theses were dedicated to some

---

good use of Divine grace; that grace sufficient for conversion is bestowed on all, but that, inasmuch as it does not act in the way of positive compulsion or necessity, it may either be complied with or rejected; and that God predestines to salvation those only by whom He foresees that His gifts will be faithfully employed. According to Molina, the Divine intéllect comprehends three different species or *modes* of knowledge: "scientia naturalis," or that which relates to events caused immediately by God Himself; "scientia libera," which belongs to things depending on His own free will and choice; and "scientia media," which is concerned with future contingencies, dependent on the agency of man under particular circumstances. . . . Molina, while admitting the necessity both of prevenient and assisting grace, yet held that without the adhesion of the natural will grace does not become effectual to its designed purpose.'—Jervis's 'Gallican Church and the Revolution,' vol. i., pp. 383, 384.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

cardinal, whose red gown concealed the dangerous innovations.*

It would be a mistake to suppose that the impending battle was to be fought for the sake of truth alone. The Jesuits and the Dominicans had long cherished a secret but terrible jealousy. The Order of St. Ignatius was invading Christendom: its disciples preached, taught, disputed in all the chairs of all the universities. Burning with zeal for the salvation of the wealthy, and especially of kings (so much so, that, in order to make salvation easier to them, they had discovered a means, as was humorously remarked, for blotting out the sins of the world), they soon superseded the sons of St. Dominic, who since the thirteenth century had been privileged to direct royal consciences. As may be supposed, the Preaching Friars objected to be deprived of so fruitful an evangelical harvest, and were in a very bad temper with those who aimed at supplanting them. In their eyes the new theological system was even heretical. The Dominicans preached against the Jesuits in their churches. Father Avendano called them heretics, seducers, magicians, imps of Satan; and believed that his special vocation was to destroy their Order. Never, he said, did he celebrate mass without feeling fresh zeal for that good work.

The quarrel grew more and more bitter. In vain Rome, faithful to her practice of reserving doctrinal decisions for a time when they may have

* Serry, 'Hist.,' col. 148

political importance, tried to impose silence on both parties. Both wanted to fight, not to hold their tongues. A martial spirit pervaded the Jesuit and Dominican convents. Besides, experience proves that theologians always prefer condemnation to silence. At last, on the 10th of January, 1595, Clement VIII. referred the case to the Inquisition of Castile. Eight chancellors were appointed, and the trial of Molina was instituted. I call it the trial of Molina because, according to theological custom, the discussion was reduced to a purely personal question: 'Does Molina deserve to be condemned?'

The Jesuits were well pleased with the way the question was put. For, supposing the doctrine should be censured, they reserved to themselves the question of fact: 'Is the condemned doctrine really that of Molina?'* Sixty-one propositions, extracted from the book 'The Concord,' were judged contrary to sound doctrine. The peril was imminent; the sentence was drawn up. The Jesuits were on the point of signing peace on the hardest conditions, when the hero of the predestinarians, Thomas of Lemos, unwilling to let slip such a fine opportunity for displaying his powers, declared that reconciliation would be worse than defeat.† The elevation of Bellarmin to the dignity of cardinal, and of Acquaviva to that of general, induced the Jesuits to hope that

* Serry, 'Hist.,' col. 358.

† *Id.*, *ibid.*, col. 229.

they might make better terms for themselves at a later period. Moreover, Spain stood in the way. Philip II. was believed to be a Molinist.* Between the Courts of Rome and Madrid there was a perpetual interchange of requests and diplomatic notes as on a matter of the first importance.

Then, for the first time, scholastic disputes were heard of; hitherto the debate had consisted merely of assertion and counter-assertion, without anything that could be called argument. The champion of the Jesuits was the first thus to throw down the gauntlet. Lemos took it up. 'So be it,' said he. 'Let us dispute for two years; I do not shrink from the contest.'†

Clement VIII., dissatisfied with his advisers, yielded after some resistance. On the 2nd of January, 1598, solemn discussions were opened in one of the halls of the Vatican. The pope himself presided; on either side were the cardinals, and opposite to him the secretaries. In the middle of the arena stood the combatants. Each Order had selected its most skilful tilter, who was supported during the conflict by his general. The pope opened the sittings with a prayer to the Holy Ghost, which was thought most beautiful.‡ The dispute was thus carried on for

* Serry, col. 154.

† 'Concedantur a Reverendissimis Dominis disputationes, et disputemus per duos annos; quia ego non refugio illas.' —Serry, col. 266.

‡ Frankfort abridgment, p. 50.

seven years, during which seventy-seven congregations were held. So long as he lived, Clement never missed one of them. It surprises us now that the making of a dogma should cost an infallible authority so much trouble: but in those days no one was surprised to see the Holy Spirit hesitating, changing its opinions, and inflicting on itself the same tortures as are experienced by the poor human spirit which has no pretension to infallibility.

II.

The first to step into the arena was the redoubtable Lemos. Endowed with a voice of thunder, a wide chest, a firm and sometimes terrible look, indefatigable in debate,* inaccessible to embarrassment or hesitation, this vigorous child of scholasticism was never worsted in the combats of the schools. By adroit distinctions he evaded the strictest syllogisms, and by antagonistic quotations destroyed hopes founded on the most precise texts. He had been brought up in those Spanish universities, where had been taught for centuries a petrified science, which had not progressed one step since the days of Peter Lombard, and whose immutable poles are St. Augustine and St. Thomas. Lemos knew those two doctors better than any of his colleagues. Long habit had accustomed him to the

* 'Ferrea et infragilis illi vox, sermonis robur, pectus solidum, ingenium acre ac vehemens; quæ dotes, singulari præsertim eruditioni conjunctæ, quantum in contentiosa disputatione valeant nemo nescit.'—Serry, col. 356.

most intricate arguments, and his untiring lungs secured him the victory in those conflicts in which he who holds out the longest is the conqueror. The Jesuits knew this, and wishing to withdraw him from Rome, induced Philip III. to offer him a bishopric. But Lemos saw the trap, and preferred to carry on the controversy rather than to accept the mitre.*

Lemos was opposed by the Jesuit Valentia, less brilliant than his adversary in controversial fencing, but clever, artful, rich in mental reservations, and worthy to figure among the four animals in the apocalyptic allegory which Escobar has introduced in the preface to his 'Moral Theology.'† When he joined in the debate he obstinately refused to take the usual oath, and nothing could be obtained from him but these words: 'I swear what the others have sworn.'‡ As he was compelled prematurely to abandon the contest, it is impossible to say what subtlety that reticence concealed, or what advantage he expected to derive from it. Valentia's words were sharp and insulting;§ he sometimes had to make humiliating apologies for his sallies. One day he accused the whole *congregation* of forgery; when the accuracy of the text was proved, he excused himself by

* Serry, col. 356, 357.

† See 'Provinciales,' 5th letter.

‡ Serry, col. 250.

§ *Contumeliose magis quam theologice* occurs several times in the reports of the sittings (Serry, col. 259, 273).

saying he only used the reproach in a harmless and classical sense.* He had a wonderful talent for finding side issues, avoiding the most difficult points, and finding plausible reasons for adjourning the debate whenever he was hard pressed. The rules of scholastic controversy always furnished him with some expedient, which made the pope and cardinals very impatient. Lemos affected to be vexed at it, and† maliciously proposed to resume the debate every day. Valentia, on his side, seemed to have nothing so much at heart as to bring the contest to a speedy conclusion, and began his discourse with these words: 'Illuxit optata dies qua nobis disputandum est.'‡

They began by verifying the propositions of Molina. As the strong point of the Jesuits was that the condemned doctrine did not represent that of their brother, they employed all sorts of stratagems in order to avoid agreeing on that preliminary, and to retain the power of making protests. They pleaded headaches,§ the obligations of their professorships, etc., in order to absent themselves from this sitting; it was post-

* 'In significatione honesta et latina illud sumi cupimus.' —Serry, col. 263, 264.

† Serry, col. 248. Lemos, col. 180. 'Semper hic pater quærit dilationes et alias congregationes,' said Clement VIII. (*Ibid.*, 541).

‡ 'Serry,' col. 546, etc.

§ 'Capitis vertiginem causatus' (Serry, col. 379). 'Tum propter ægram valetudinem patris Cobos, qui fere semper dolore capitis torquetur' (*Ibid.*, chap. ccxlviii.).

poned. The general appeared alone, and the inquiry began; he observed that Valentia's presence was indispensable. They waited several hours. Valentia had scarcely arrived when the general went away. Valentia remarked that however anxious he might be to remain, his vow of obedience compelled him to follow his superior. He returned half an hour later to request that the sitting might be deferred. The secretaries refused, and compelled him to stay; but a few moments later a messenger from the general summoned Valentia on pressing business, and he had to obey, to the great annoyance of the secretaries, who began to tire of these subterfuges.* They waited for another hour, after which he coolly sent them word that, reserving the right of expounding Molina's doctrine as he understood it, he refused to accept any preliminary exposition.

Lemos stamped with impatience while awaiting the contest. Father Choquet, in his book, 'Des entrailles maternelles de la Sainte Vierge pour l'ordre des frères prêcheurs' (p. 326, edition of 1634), assures us that at the opening of the Congregations Lemos was surrounded by a halo that dazzled the eyes of the cardinals.† But Lemos was a man who could dispense with miracles. He

* 'Gratum nuntium lætus excepit, et abiit; relictis ea in cella secretariis, qui se tam lepida scena ludi plus satis obstupescebant.'—Serry col. 358.

† In his order, Lemos was regarded as a thaumaturge. See Serry, p. 36, and Lemos, p. 12.

had already severely wounded Valentia in nine consecutive tournaments, when an incident unheard of in theological records unhorsed his clever adversary, and put him out of the lists for ever. Valentia's strongest hopes rested on a text of St. Augustine's. To make it agree better with his views, the Jesuit altered one word—only one! . . . *Et* instead of *Scilicet*.* The fraud was very innocent, and no doubt he might have found among the casuists of his society a score of texts to authorize it.† But the manœuvre did not escape Lemos. Whether, as he himself asserts, supernaturally inspired by the Divine grace whose champion he was, or whether, in uttering his little fraud, Valentia risked a timid glance to ascertain whether it would pass unnoticed, the unfortunate disciple of Ignatius met the relentless and scrutinizing gaze of the Dominican, and turned pale beneath it. Lemos instantly asked permission of the pontiff, rushed forward, seized the book, which Valentia held behind his back, and, approaching the papal throne, restored the altered text. The pope, indignant at such an imposition,

* 'F. Thomas de Lemos, quum librum *De civitate Dei* apud se non haberet, *ex divino tamen auxilio efficaciter adjutus*, recordatus fuit in illo loco sancti Augustini esse verbum quoddam *scilicet*, quod tamen P. Valentia non legerat.' —Lemos, col. 279.

† According to others, the Jesuits had printed for the purpose a spurious edition of St. Augustine's works, by comparing which with the Vatican edition Lemos pointed out the fraud (Serry, col. 369, 370).

raised his hands towards heaven, exclaiming, 'Oh! oh!' This was too much for the wretched Jesuit. 'Abandoned by the grace which he had insulted,' says a contemporary,* 'he dropped on the floor motionless, breathless. His general raised him and led him out; but from that time his health failed, and he wasted away; he was sent to Naples for purer air, and there he soon died of grief for his mischance.'†

Valentia's catastrophe was called a miracle by

* 'Justo Dei judicio, ut creditur, derelictus ab illius gratia, quam furore quodam arreptus impugnabat, deliquio animi correptus in terram corruebat. Inde eductus semper se male habuit, et frequentibus capitis debilitatibus laboravit. . . . Prænuntiaverat longo antea tempore vir quidam catholicus futurum ut patenti aliquo miraculo Deus hujus hominis audaciam esset cohibiturus.'—Pegna, quoted by Serry, col. 374, 375.

† 'Tunc facto signo a sanctissimo, ut illius librum acciperem, accessi ad ipsum; quia librum manu tenens quodam modo retinebat et abscondebat post tergum; et arripiens ipsum quasi vi dixi: Sanctissimus præcepit. . . Tunc ipse pontifex cum indignatione magna intuens ipsum Valentiam, manibus et gestu dixit: Ho! ho! Et post pauca quum vellet P. Valentia respondere, passus est tam potentem vertiginem ut, cadens in terram, extra se totus jaceret; quem suus generalis inclinatus conabatur elevare, dicens pontifici: Quod passus erat P. Valentia vertiginem' (Lemos, col. 279, 282). 'In this dispute *De auxiliis*,' says Duperron, 'all the Jesuits were at their wits' end. Valentia was ashamed and confused by his misadventure; he broke his heart through the grief it caused him' (Serry, col. 375, foot note). An engraving, inserted in Lemos's 'Actes,' humorously represents his adversary's discomfiture.

the predestinarians,* and powerfully assisted their cause. The Jesuit Arrubal took the place of his unfortunate brother, and endured the assaults of Lemos for more than a year. The Molinists resorted to ingenious devices to parry the hard blows of the Dominican; they published two different versions of Molina's works, and when a text was cited against them, they used to pretend that the right edition did not contain it; besides which, the arrangement of the book being changed, their adversaries had the greatest difficulty in finding the passages, and often failed to find them at all, at which Loyola's disciples exulted.† But nothing could resist the subtle dialectics and powerful voice of Lemos. One day, his adversary had the effrontery to deny the major premise of his syllogism: denying the major is to a schoolman the greatest insult which can be offered him, for in a well-conducted argument that proposition must always be incontestable; it is therefore equivalent to telling him to his face that he does not understand logic.‡ Lemos, justly indignant, threw his

* '. . . Ad pedes pontificis in apoplexim inciderat. Quod etsi minus mirari liceat (quum etiam Diodorus Cronus dialecticus, in ipso scholæ suggestu, præ pudore interierit, quod Stilponis problema solvere nesciisset), ab adversariis tamen in suæ doctrinæ commendationem instar miraculi jactatum est,' says a contemporaneous historian, quoted by Serry, col. 376.

† Serry, col. 88.

‡ This is why, in an argument, the formula: *Salva reverentia* or *Pace tua*, must always accompany the negation of a major.

doctor's cap on the floor, and vowed that he would not pick it up until they had granted him the contested proposition. From time to time he fortified his voice, which must have been sorely tried: after each attack upon the enemy he tossed off a full glass.

In the month of October, 1602, Arrubal was worn out, and was sent to Naples, where he found Valentia at the point of death. He received the last sigh of that martyr to Molinism,* whose death caused a great sensation in Rome. Stories were told which boded ill for his salvation. Clement VIII. was talking to his nephew, Cardinal Peter Aldobrandini, when he heard of the Jesuit's death; the cardinal asked him what he thought of the deceased's soul: 'If he had no other grace than the one he defended,' replied the pope, 'he must have had difficulty in entering heaven.'† Some days later, the cardinal met the triumphant Dominican: 'Father Lemos,' he said, 'the pope intends to pronounce you irregular, because you have killed Valentia.' 'It was not I who killed him,' replied Lemos modestly, 'it was the pope himself, who is incapable of being irregular; or, rather, we should say the unfortunate

* '. . . Ut gratiæ molinisticæ martyri, extremum agonem agenti, justa persolveret' (Serry, col. 379). 'Manibus ejus bene precor: absit tamen ut tales colat ecclesia martyres,' adds the Dominican historian (Serry, col. 377).

† 'Se non ha havuto altra gratia di quella che ha difesa, non sarà andato in paradiso.' 'Jocosum quidem, sed interim notandum pontificis dictum!' adds Serry (col. 378).

Jesuit killed St. Augustine, since he falsified his proposition.'* These jests were considered in exquisite taste.

Predetermination was carrying everything before it.† The champions of the Jesuits were all struck down with fever or vertigo, and this passage from the Scriptures was applied to them: 'Dominus miscuit in medio ejus spiritum vertiginis, et errare fecit Ægyptum in omni opere suo.'‡ They used to represent themselves as persecuted, now complaining of having been convicted without being heard, whereas the members of the council said they had listened till they were tired; now demanding a council, now pretending that it was not an article of faith that Clement VIII. was the true pope;§ exactly the same subterfuges for which the Jansenists were afterwards treated as heretics. They took advantage of the respite granted them before their condemnation to disseminate their doctrine in the universities, and frighten the pope with the threat of a schism;‖ last of all, they had recourse to celestial revelations: many books were published, whose authors, pre-

* Serry, col. 377, 378.

† 'Gratiæ victrici jam canebatur Io triumphe.'—Serry, col. 699.

‡ 'Præ doloris acerbitate in febrim incidit Petrus Arrubal. Bastida vero, qui generalis vices in congregationibus identidem egerat, eodem ac ipse vertigine agitari cæpit, adeo ut publicum in urbe scomma volitaret: Dominus,' etc.—Serry, col. 379, 380).

§ Serry, col. 305, 321, 333. Frankfort Abridgment, p. 41.

‖ *Ibid.*, col. 312, 317, 329.

tending to an intuitive knowledge of theology, said they had read the secrets of Molinism in the mind of God. A nun, named Marina Escobar, dreamt that she saw St. Dominic, who directed her to pray more fervently than ever for the imperilled Society of Jesus. Naturally enough, Marina was surprised that the patriarch should recommend her to pray for the enemies of his Order; but Dominic explained to her that, in Abraham's bosom, nothing is thought of but the glory of God.*

All this did not prevent the danger from being imminent. All the members of the council but two were hostile to Molina. Clement VIII. himself scarcely concealed his sympathy with predestination; in all things he yielded to the influence of Cardinal Alexander Peretti, to whom he owed the tiara, and that of Francis Pegna, secretary of the Rota, who was so unfriendly to the Jesuits that he strongly opposed the beatification of Loyola. The Marquis de Villena, Ambassador of Spain, urged on the condemnation of Molina, in order to checkmate the Jesuits, who had displeased his Court by countenancing the absolution of Henri IV. The censure was already drawn up, and, had Clement VIII. lived a few weeks longer, predestination would have been an article of faith.

III.

But Heaven had decided otherwise. Clement VIII. died of fatigue from attending all the con-

* Serry, col. 331 and fol.

gregations, whose debates he followed with the greatest eagerness. The good pope took the whole thing seriously. He was often met in the early morning, going on foot and unattended, from Monte Cavallo to Santa Maria Maggiore, where he would prostrate himself for two or three hours, dressed as a penitent, *ad limina apostolorum.** To preside over the congregations was indeed no easy task, because of the martial humour of the combatants; and the pontiff, out of patience, often said, 'Voi credete che siete sulla piazza Navona.'† His death, regarded by the Jesuits as a visitation from Providence, seems to have injuriously affected his infallibility, as the general opinion was that everything must be begun over again. People often quoted a saying of Bellarmin's, which they thought prophetic, when Cardinal Montalto told him that Clement was about to give judgment in favour of the Thomists. 'I do not deny,' replied the Jesuit, 'that he is able to do so, or that he is willing to do so; but I am certain that he will not do so.'‡ This sentence, construed in various ways, gave rise to many conjectures.

Leo XI., successor to Clement VIII., only wore the tiara one month. Paul V., who followed him, was little more favourable to the Jesuits than Clement. But powerful influences were about to come to the aid of the ambitious Order which every day said more proudly, 'Catholicism, it is

* Frankfort Abridgment, p. 63.

† Lemos, p. 241, 341. ‡ Serry, col. 311, 312.

I.' Bellarmin, Francis of Sales, Duperron, openly supported the theology of the Society. Bellarmin did not hesitate to confess his theoretical sympathies with Thomism; yet, as a good brother, he lost no opportunity of helping the cause of Molina.*

Arrubal was succeeded by La Bastide, who was haughty and self-assertive. At first Lemos assumed towards him a tone of superiority justified by his past victories. 'Do you think,' said the Jesuit, 'that you are dealing with a beginner? You have before you a veteran, who has been teaching for several years in the public chairs of Spain, and has broken many a lance with your people.'† La Bastide changed the tactics which had been adopted by Molina's apologists. They had kept on the defensive, content to justify their brother from charges made against him. This was inviting defeat, for everyone acquainted with the rules of scholastic debate knows that of two adversaries the one obliged to defend himself is sure to be beaten. La Bastide knew this, and availed himself of a good opportunity for taking the offensive against predestination. Great Lemos, what must have been your indignation at hearing an irreverent and shameless attack on the doctrine consecrated by the name of the 'Angel of the

* Serry, col. 158-62.

† 'Putas cum tirone loqui? Agis cum veterano, qui publice multos annos in Hispania docuit, et sæpius cum vestris concertationes habuit.'—Serry, col. 483.

Schools'! . . . It was even worse when, in a long discourse, La Bastide drew out under twenty heads a parallel between the doctrines of Bañez and Calvin, and showed their complete identity. This was a murderous manœuvre. To prove predestination contrary to reason was of no great consequence; but to prove it in accordance with Calvin was to deal it a deadly blow.

Lemos knew this, and mustered all his forces. Calvin's name, continually repeated by La Bastide, had left a deep impression on the minds of the cardinals: he replied by the epithets Pelagian and semi-Pelagian, which he hurled at his adversary. The distinction between *divided meaning* and *compound meaning* helped him to ward off the attack for a time, but without fully satisfying the judges.* Lemos was diving into his dialectics and struggling desperately under La Bastide's terrible parallel, when a sudden flash of light helped him out of his difficulty. 'Yes,' said he, in his firmest tone, 'Calvin, like Bañez, held that grace was effectual in itself, independently of will. But, after all, this is not the point on which he was mistaken: his error lay in believing the consent of will to be necessary as *necessity of consequent*, whereas it is necessary only as *necessity of consequence*.'†

A cry of admiration welcomed this stroke of genius. Lemos, tempted to take pride in so great

* Lemos, col. 844-46, 977 and fol.

† *Ibid.*, col. 985, 986, 1020 and fol.; 1195, 1198, 1232.

a triumph, passed his hand across his forehead, and exclaimed in order to avert the sinful thought: 'It is by the grace of God that I am what I am' —'Gratia Dei sum id quod sum.' The sitting lasted six hours; the cardinals on leaving the room unanimously declared that Brother Thomas had never spoken so well before.*

But times were altered. The most adroit fencing of Lemos could not prevail against political reasons which had recently acquired predominance. The simple schoolman fancied himself still in the time of Clement VIII., when the pope himself mixed with the combatants, and honestly tried to understand them. Paul V. stood in need of the Jesuits; they had served him well in his struggle against Venice and Fra Paolo; he could not now offend them. Duperron made him understand that it was impossible to condemn such zealous allies. Besides, Henri IV.—most competent judge!—remembering the services they had rendered him, interested himself on their behalf, and his intercession outweighed all the arguments of Lemos.† The pope thought he could not do better than put the whole affair into Duperron's hands. It seems to us that, if we were infallible by divine right, we should

* 'Fuit ista congregatio celebris, de qua multi mirati sunt quod tot ac tantis, ubi fecerunt summum prælium patres societatis, sic ex tempore fuisset responsum. . . Omnes in universum cardinales et censores audientes cum pontifice dixerunt: nunquam sic locutum fuisse fratrem Thomam.'—Lemos, col. 1232, 1318.

† Serry, col. 791-802.

not dream of handing over causes submitted to our judgment to a man liable to err. But either from modesty, or from mistrust of his celestial gifts, or because he did not feel the inward enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, Paul V. delegated his infallibility in order not to compromise himself. In short, the sun of predetermination was setting fast. Lemos himself, the indefatigable Lemos, vanquished, though not by the arms of scholasticism, was compelled to withdraw from the fray, and his place was for the time taken by Alvarez.

To the sixty congregations of Clement VIII. were added seventeen, presided over by Paul V. The members of the council were exhausted, the heroes of the struggle were either dead or tired out; the contest was about to cease for want of combatants. It was generally reported that the bull against Molina was ready for promulgation; so that predestination, after having been an article of faith in the mind of Clement VIII., was now in the pocket of Paul V. But this afforded small satisfaction to the Dominicans. Of what use was it to know as theologians that they had conquered, if they were to appear vanquished before the eyes of Christendom? Their prayers, their entreaties were useless. On August 28, 1607, Paul V., in the midst of the Sacred College, declared that he would proclaim his decision whenever he should think fit; and, in the meantime, enjoined silence on both parties, forbidding

them to speak ill of each other, or to treat each other as heretics.

It is unnecessary to say that this last injunction was not obeyed.

Thus ended a struggle which had lasted twelve years, cost the life of a pope and three or four doctors, engrossed three pontificates, and occupied a whole generation of theologians, prelates, and cardinals. When the pope's decision was made known, the dismay of the Dominicans, and the delight of the Jesuits, knew no bounds. The latter, who had lived so long in dread of the Romish thunders, felt the wildest joy. With amazing falsehood they said that mercy had been shown to their adversaries, but that they were really condemned, and that henceforth the Society's opinion became a dogma, certain though not defined, like the Immaculate Conception. In Spain they assumed an air of such insolent triumph, that people used to point at the preaching friars as beaten men.* When the fathers of the Society visited ladies, they talked of nothing but their victory.† They held public rejoicings at Salamanca, Valladolid, Medina del Campo, Palencia, Toledo, and Valentia. All the

* 'Usque adeo jesuitæ falsis reportatæ victoriæ rumoribus plebem universam occupaverant, ut pene prædicatores digito monstrarentur.'—Serry, col. 713.

† 'Mulieres invisentes, tam supremæ quam infimæ notæ, sine aliqua prorsus distinctione, de hac re verba faciunt.' —Letter of the provincial of the Dominicans of Spain to Paul V., quoted by Serry, col. 716.

Jesuits' colleges had three days' vacation; there were fireworks, theatrical performances, bull-fights, triumphal arches, on which appeared, in letters of gold, 'MOLINA VICTOR;'* and, in the midst of all this amusement, were solemn thanks-giving masses, processions walking with lighted candles to the sound of trumpets.† They even gave to Molina the title of 'Holy Father:' the success of the whole affair was attributed to him.‡ Paul V. could not help laughing when he read the following letter, written by one of the Superiors of the Society to an officer of the King of Spain: 'By the grace of God most High, we have just learned the happiest news we ever received since the foundation of our Society, or ever can receive. The Sovereign Pontiff has decided in favour of the Society. . . . Henceforward the doctrine of the preaching friars must be looked upon as heretical, or, at least, as suspicious. We, therefore, intend to spend this night in feasting and games, and to celebrate to-morrow, at matins, a solemn thanks-

* 'Feriæ universis studentibus triduum indictæ; volatilium ignium festivi apparatus; publicæ fabularum actiones; tauri per plateas et vicos agitati; triumphales arcus magna mole positi, quorum in fronte aureis litteris incisum erat: *Molina victor*,' etc.—Serry, col. 713 and fol.

† 'Accersitis civibus cereis luminaribus accensis, sonitu clangoreque tubarum,' etc. (*Ibid.*, col. 716). All these particulars are taken from the authentic documents referred to by Serry.

‡ 'Fuere qui, varias inter Molinæ laudes, sacros ei titulos deferrent, victoriamque quanta erat, hujusce sancti patris (sic etenim loquebantur) meritis adscriberent.'—Serry, col. 713, 714.

giving mass. In consequence, we beg your excellency to be good enough to send us, as soon as possible, the musicians and drummers of your regiment, to remain to-night and to-morrow until evening. We have given the bearer of this letter money to buy fireworks; that is the chief object of his mission. Your excellency will be good enough to spread the news throughout your territory, and acquaint even the preaching friars with it, should an opportunity offer.'*

In hujus rei gratiam, nobis in animo esset noctem hanc festivis ludis transigere, missamque admodum solemnem crastina luce matutinis horis celebrare, pro gratiis referendis. Quapropter dignabitur Dominatio Vestra, castri sui tibicines et tympanotribas mittere quantocitius, qui hic totam noctem diemque crastinum, ad horas usque serotinas, permaneant. Pecuniam præsentium latori muneravimus, ad coemendos ignitos tubulos volatiles,' etc.—Serry, col. 714.

A WORD UPON THE TRIAL OF GALILEO.

GALILEO'S trial was a crisis in the history of the human mind. Then it was that scholastic science, that weak compound of the Bible and of Aristotle misunderstood, had to face true science, proving itself by itself. The old pedantry began the conflict boldly; it denounced as false and contrary to the faith the system which was truth itself. As usual, religious interests complicated the question. Setting aside sophisms, this is a fair account of how things came to pass.

In 1616, Rome expressly condemned the system of Copernicus, which it pronounced 'heretical and philosophically absurd.' In the name of the Inquisition, Galileo was enjoined to submit to that decree. He submitted in appearance, but, with the intellectual duplicity which the religious tyranny of those times occasioned, and even to a certain extent excused, he endeavoured to evade the difficulty, and to set forth the system of Copernicus as at least an hypothesis which explained the facts. For that purpose, he adopted what seemed to him the least compromising form—

that of a dialogue on the 'Systems of the World,' between a peripatetic and two partisans more or less declared of the new ideas. The peripatetic is naturally defeated on all points; nevertheless the part he plays is not made ridiculous. This is important, because it appears that Galileo was not afraid to ascribe to the beaten controversialist some arguments which had really been uttered by the reigning pope, Urban VIII.—as zealous a partisan of Aristotle in philosophy as of his own authority in matters of faith.

The dialogue was issued with the *imprimatur* of the ecclesiastical censor. The venom it contained was not perceived at first. As soon as it was discovered, Galileo was summoned to Rome. The Grand Duke of Tuscany, whose protection he then enjoyed, could obtain him no dispensation from the journey. He had to start in spite of his infirmities. He arrived in Rome on the 13th of February, 1633, and his first place of confinement was the palace of the Florentine ambassador.

The case progressed but slowly. On the 12th of April, Galileo was imprisoned in the Holy Office, but was not thrown into a dungeon. Out of regard for the grand duke, he was treated with kindness. On the 30th of April, he returned to the palace of the embassy to recover from an illness. On the evening of the 20th of June, he was again sent for to the Holy Office. He went there on the morning of the 21st. On that day the official inquiry took place. When confronted by the

Inquisition, Galileo unhesitatingly renounced the Copernican system. He resisted only on the question of intention. His adversaries, deeply wounded by the dialogue on the 'Systems of the World,' reproached him with having offered in that work an indirect apology for the heretical opinions. He obstinately denied that intention, and maintained that his sole object was to discuss the arguments *pro* and *contra*, in order to prove to foreigners that if Rome condemned the system of Copernicus on theological grounds, she was not ignorant of all that could be said in its favour. This was subtle; but all inquiries into matters which rest entirely on the conscience necessarily lead to artifice.

Did they put Galileo to torture? His silence on this point and the absence of any particulars on the subject in the correspondence of Niccolini, ambassador from the Grand Duke of Tuscany to Rome, have been regarded as proofs of the negative, and, no doubt, they have much weight. It should nevertheless be recollected that, in conformity with the rules of the Inquisition, the first thing demanded from Galileo was solemnly to bind himself not to divulge anything that should take place between himself and the formidable tribunal. He kept his promise with the fidelity of terror. The official documents relating to the trial could alone throw light on the question; but a kind of fatality has prevented the publication of these documents. From the archives of the

Inquisition, where they had been carefully hidden, they were brought to Paris in 1809. Some one undertook to publish them with a French translation. The translation was already far advanced when the Restoration took place. The pope reclaimed the documents; but Louis XVIII., out of sheer curiosity, kept them for some time in his study. One day the papers disappeared, and were sought for in vain in all the Government offices. Rome continued to demand their restitution until 1845, when M. Rossi, it is said, promised to return them, on condition that they should be published in their entirety; and they were placed in the hands of Pius IX.

If this statement is correct,* there is reason for surprise that the authorities in Paris should have returned such important documents without previously having them copied. At all events, if the promise of publication was ever made, it has not been kept. At the present time nothing is known of the official documents except part of the French translation, discovered in 1821 by Delambre. Monsignor Marino Marini, who had them all under his eyes, composed a work on the subject. But he took care not to give the documents *in extenso*. He only quoted the passages which suited him. The system followed at Rome in the publication of historical documents does not induce the belief that Monsignor Marini displayed much impartiality in his selections. As a rule,

* It is that of M. Biot, *Journal des Savants*, July, 1858.

Rome grants access to documents and authorizes their publication only when assured that an author will be the apologist of papal history. Nearly all the collections of historical documents which appear in Rome are systematically incomplete. It is probable that if, among the documents relative to the trial, Monsignor Marini met with texts contrary to the theses of Catholic apologists, he withheld them. The acrimonious tone of his Memoir, and his haughty attitude in controversy, are bad signs. What would they not do at Rome *ad evitandum scandalum?* The different paginations cited by Marini seem even to indicate that the manuscript he worked upon had been mutilated before it reached him. We are therefore obliged to read, in the fragmentary documents given us, the probable meaning of parts cut out by the scissors of interested parties. And it must be confessed that, among the sentences published, there are some which seem to contradict the apologist, or at least give rise to doubts.

In a fragment of the interrogation of the 21st of June, published by Marini, Galileo is asked whether, after the injunction received in 1616, he did not persist in supporting the Copernican system. He replies in the negative. He is then informed that they will have to resort against him to the opportune legal remedies—that is to say, to torture; 'Devenietur ad torturam,' says a passage quoted by Marini. The threat of torture is therefore proved. The report adds that, as nothing

more could be obtained from him, 'remissus est in locum suum.' What, then, took place, and what was that 'locus suus' to which he was sent back? According to Marini, it was the palace of the Tuscan ambassador. But this is false, as M. Biot shows; for a letter from that ambassador, dated 26th of June, states that Galileo was detained at the Holy Office during all the time that elapsed between his examination and his recantation; that 'locus suus' was therefore the apartment occupied by the accused at the Holy Office. Marini was acquainted with the ambassador's letter, for, in reference to another point, he quotes a passage from it.

How was Galileo treated in the interval between the examination and the recantation? In the absence of authentic documents, we are reduced to conjectures based upon the sentence of condemnation pronounced on the 22nd of June. 'Whereas it appeared to us that you did not reveal the whole truth concerning your intention, we deemed it necessary to have recourse to a *rigorous examination* of your person, at which examination you replied like a true Catholic in the matter of the above-mentioned intention.' On the 21st, Galileo denied having had the intention; he was threatened with torture; on the evening of the 21st or on the morning of the 22nd, the 'rigorous examination' was proceeded with. That examination was nothing else than an inquiry accompanied with torture. Marini maintains that,

in Galileo's case, the threat was not carried out. That may be. It is, however, noteworthy that, until the rigorous examination, Galileo did not reply to the satisfaction of his judges. After the rigorous examination, it appears that he answered like 'a true Catholic.' It must be confessed that the conversion took place just at the right moment. Be this as it may, we must say with Dr. Parchappe that 'the doubt of history is the deserved chastisement of the secret of the inquisitorial procedure, obstinately preserved for the last two hundred and twenty-seven years.'* This doubt would have been cleared up, had it so pleased Monsignor Marini, or rather had the precious documents of the Roman archives been placed in the hands of persons acting solely in the interests of truth.

After all, as M. Bertrand truly observes in his fine essay on Galileo, this is but a secondary point. Even supposing Galileo to have been subjected to the 'question,' it is quite certain he was not maimed. Preparations for the punishment probably sufficed to satisfy the severity of the inquisitorial code and obtain the 'Catholic answer.' In any case, a few minutes of torture, if Galileo really suffered it, must have been trifling compared with the moral anguish which filled his latter years. From the time of his condemnation, the unfortunate man lived in constant dread, quite

* 'Galilée, sa vie, ses découvertes et ses travaux.' Hachette, 1866, 8°.

secluded, speaking to no one on the subject of his discoveries and ideas, avoiding all intercourse with learned foreigners, whose very approach might have compromised him. And the shame of all these evasions, tergiversations, subtle subterfuges! . . . Such was the moral degradation to which religious terror had brought Italy in the seventeenth century, that Galileo did not perhaps consider these as his most cruel torments.

Nothing that relates to a genius like Galileo should be indifferent to us. He is truly the great founder of modern science. He is far superior not only to Bacon, whom English vanity has much overrated, but to Descartes, who did not make experiments—to Pascal, who did not carry his researches so far as he might have done, but allowed himself to be drawn away by chimeras; he is second only to Newton. While the schoolmen at Padua were quietly enjoying the premiums which teaching bodies offer to routine and mediocrity, Galileo made researches on his own account; he studied nature instead of traditional books. I have seen, at Padua, programmes of the beginning of the seventeenth century, in which his name appears with trifling emoluments, beside those of obscure pedants in receipt of large stipends. The latter were regarded as the great men of their time, the honour of their school, and the defenders of sound philosophy. Knowledge must indeed possess intrinsic worth, the divine impulse which urges the universe towards the accomplishment of

its ends must be greatly interested in the discovery of truth, to enable the student, whose mission it is to reveal the laws of reality, to follow his vocation, without hope of reward, in spite of persecutions and insults, and heedless of the advantages of all kinds which accrue to those who humour the delusions of men and accommodate themselves to the general mediocrity.

PORT-ROYAL.

FIRST ESSAY, AUGUST 28, 1860.

M. SAINTE-BEUVE has completed his fine history of Port-Royal. Many persons have shown surprise at the preference given by the gifted critic to a subject which appears out of his usual range. They did not sufficiently consider the secret ties uniting all branches of mental research, nor did they do full justice to M. Sainte-Beuve's talent. The profound observation and the taste for the serious study of the mind which characterize the illustrious Academician must have attracted him to religious history, which reveals human nature in its rarest and most singular moods; and in the history of religion there are few passages that can have so much interest as that of Port-Royal for a philosophical historian. That abortive attempt to reform French Catholicism is full of warnings and examples. There are subjects more attractive to the imagination: the history of the religious Orders in the middle ages—the Franciscan movement, for instance—offers far more vivid pic-

° 'Port-Royal,' by M. Sainte-Beuve, 2nd edition. Five vols., 1859, 1860.

tures. Others are more imposing, and certainly the Reformation of the sixteenth century occupies a place in the world's history to which the obscure work of such men as Arnauld and Lemaître can never lay claim. But, within a restricted area, Port-Royal witnessed the development of characters of the noblest stamp. In the battle of life the struggle is a better thing than the prize. Doctrines are not so important as the devotion and the heroism they have inspired. Like those little municipalities of antiquity and of mediæval Italy, whose internal revolutions still excite our enthusiasm, because such men as Miltiades, Aristides, Dante, or Savonarola were involved in them, Port-Royal has imparted to devotional narratives and conventual anecdotes the proportions of history. The results were meagre, and the arena of the struggle was narrow, but the souls were great. And the sympathy of posterity is not commended by success, nor by the truth of a doctrine, nor by the large proportions of an event. The soul alone triumphs over time, and while revolutions effected by violence leave on the memory but a barren narrative, every noble heart which has left its trace in some corner of the world's annals will in due time, whatever may be the changes of opinion or the injustice of the schools, find friends and admirers.

The perfection with which M. Sainte-Beuve has treated his subject is his best justification for choosing it. The skilful historian never produced

a more finished picture, more vivid, more complete in all its details. What entitles M. Sainte-Beuve to a special place among the critics of our century is the lofty philosophy which underlies all his judgments. This philosophy is not anxious to display itself, and M. Sainte-Beuve is far too much master of his art to fix his theory of the universe within a formula. But that theory is the hidden soul, the mysterious breath whence proceed those charming utterances whose origin remains unknown to the vulgar. He has seen the link uniting all things, has touched the limits of the actual, and having, in thought, reached the point where the most contrary appearances explain and justify themselves, he watches the birth of human opinions, sees that they correspond to legitimate though necessarily incomplete principles, grasps them, adopts them in part, and then points out where they are weak and doomed to decay. I sometimes wonder why, having thus penetrated to the very beginnings of consciousness, he has not more constantly seen how near to God are the foundations of man's being, and how impossible it is that a series of finite destinies leading to nothing higher can account for the existence of things, and especially of mankind. Perhaps the study of reflective literature reveals less clearly than the study of the spontaneous productions of the mind (languages, primitive poetry, popular beliefs, mythologies, religions) that divine force, that wonderful purpose, superior to all liberty, which

fulfils itself through the agency of the world and of man; and it is chiefly to the productions of reflective centuries that M. Sainte-Beuve has devoted himself. Never before were the different aspects of the world of the finite spirit so brightly and forcibly depicted. If he does not always submit to the strict conditions of the chastened style handed down to us from the close of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, it is because those conditions would sometimes exclude the points he wishes to express.* As for me, I confess, of three or four literary passions, to which I have always returned, after many attempts to break my chains, that for M. Sainte-Beuve is the one which has resisted the hardest trials. I have often differed from him as regards the present, for the present is doubtful and incomplete; but as regards the past, which alone fully exists, since it alone is complete, unalterable, with all its consequences attached, I do not think we can ever seriously disagree.

The peculiar bent of M. Sainte-Beuve leads him to study men rather than the abstract march of events. Although the divers phases through which Port-Royal passed have been admirably sketched by him, they do not constitute the most important feature of his narrative. Besides, part of M. Sainte-Beuve's work served as a course of public lectures; and the arrangement of topics required

* The last volumes are absolutely perfect in style. See some admirable pages, vol. iii., p. 272 and fol.

by a lecture is quite different from that which suits a book. Hence, at times, the reader's view is a little obstructed; the general movement is hidden by episodes and portraits. But what charm, what acute observation, what sound judgment, what faithful colouring! M. Cousin alone has been equally successful in giving us the atmosphere of old French society, and interesting us in its conflicts. The art of those two masters has nothing in common; the result is the same. M. Cousin throws himself unreservedly into the epoch of his choice; he speaks its language, adopts its ideas, espouses all its quarrels. M. Sainte-Beuve remains beyond and above the controversy he relates. He does not adopt any prejudice; he speaks as a critic of the nineteenth century; yet his picture is none the less finished. The involuntary faith of the reader is a decisive test of the truth of the picture. If we compare Racine's poor 'Histoire de Port-Royal' with this lively narrative, we shall at once see the difference. Instead of the partisan zeal which led Racine to remove every trace of weakness from his history; instead of the timidity with which he omitted heroic scenes whenever he thought their details too startling, suppressing, for instance, the very original story of the 'Journée du Guichet,' Sainte-Beuve has exhibited all the rude vigour of time and place. To write the history of religious movements successfully, one must not love them too much, or rather, must love them

as their historian, not as their disciple. No one can write the history of his ancestors well. M. Sainte-Beuve would doubtless have pleased us less had he held a strong opinion on the book of Jansen, and had he not been indifferent to the question of grace.

Everybody has ancestors in the past, but ours were not at Port-Royal. The masters of Port-Royal contributed little to the scientific work of free inquiry from which has sprung the positive philosophy of modern times. Neither the physical nor the historical sciences are much indebted to them. The false spiritualism which, in biology, led them with inexorable logic to consider animals automata, blinded them to a true conception of nature. Their philology was also second-rate. The exclusiveness with which they sought in books only for what might edify or cultivate judgment or taste, forbade their becoming proficient in that delicate science. Tillemont's histories are masterpieces of conscientiousness; but conscientiousness is not criticism. The worthy Lancelot improved a few elementary works; but he contributed much to introduce amongst us the artificial and mechanical method of learning the dead languages: he was the forerunner of Lhomond.* Port-Royal cannot be compared to the

* Lhomond (Charles François), born at Chaulnes (Somme) in 1727, died at Paris in 1794. He is known by his 'Elements of Latin Grammar,' and his 'Epitome historiæ sacræ.'—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

Italian schools of the sixteenth century for freedom of thought, or to Protestantism for grandeur of results, religious and intellectual. It is rather to the latter that we must look for our ancestors. Historical criticism is the true daughter of Protestantism. The sceptical Italy of the sixteenth century knew as little of it as the sceptical France of the eighteenth; and as to Catholicism, it so resolutely asserts its secular unity and its divine homogeneousness, that any impartial history founded on the idea of the organic growth of doctrine is regarded by it as dangerous. The discussion of the history of dogma, which is the basis of Protestantism, can alone make these delicate and troublesome researches sufficiently interesting to enlist whole generations of workers. If Greek had not been the language of the New Testament, and possessed paramount theological interest, Henri Etienne's 'Trésor de la langue grecque' would never have seen the light.

The foundation of historical and philological science is in this way the work of Protestantism. It is also, in a very true sense, the work of France; for it was by a series of Frenchmen, Protestants or affiliated to Protestantism—Castalion, Turnèbe, Lambin, J. Scaliger, the brothers Etienne, Casaubon, Saumaise, Bochart, Lefèvre, Louis Cappel, the Saumur school, and the first (almost entirely Protestant) generation of the College of France—that it was mainly accomplished. These are our ancestors. It is worthy

of notice that, in the first half of the seventeenth century, France was as proficient in philology and criticism as Germany became a hundred and fifty years later. Bochart and Cappel are equal to Michaelis; Casaubon and Saumaise to Heine and Wolf; Henry Etienne has no equal. The vast progress which Germany has made for more than a century in all branches of philology is but the continuation of what had been begun by France, so free, so enlightened, so clear-sighted in the reigns of Henri IV., Louis XIII., and the first half of that of Louis XIV. It was when France, by a series of measures culminating in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, compelled her most learned men—Saumaise, Leclerc, Bayle, Beausobre, Basnage—to expatriate themselves, that the domain of historical studies was transferred to Holland and Germany. God forbid that I should make this accusation too sweeping! The mediæval studies of Du Cange and the Benedictine school have never been surpassed in conscientiousness. The Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres have rendered distinguished service to the study of classical literature, and produced two eminent men, Fréret and Barthélemy. Montesquieu takes a high place amongst those who created the philosophy of history. But, after all, the eighteenth century did very little for the progress of historical criticism. When the Jesuits would be bold, they break out into the absurdities of Père Hardouin. The university, more cautious,

contents itself with the sweet simplicity of Rollin. Philosophical writers do not display any more seriousness. What superficial arrogance there is in their judgments on the past! What shallow presumption in their scorn! Voltaire did more harm to historical studies than an invasion of barbarians; with his light wit and his deceitful facility he discouraged the Benedictines; and it is his fault if, for fifty years, Dom Bouquet's collection was sold to the grocers for waste-paper, and the publication of the 'Histoire littéraire de la France' had to be given up for want of readers. At the opposite extreme to Voltaire stands, not Catholicism (there is more affinity between the two than people think), but liberal Protestantism, creating the criticism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and issuing towards the close of the eighteenth century in Schleiermacher, Herder, Fichte, and that marvellous blossom of German Christianity, the finest intellectual and religious development yet produced by the reflective consciousness.

In the progress of the critical spirit, which is also the modern spirit, what place should be assigned to the masters of Port-Royal? An intermediate and limited one, it must be confessed. The historical sense, which can create a living past from the dead letter of old chronicles, was blunted in them by dogmatic theology. 'La perpétuité de la foi' and the vast labours it involved were stultified at the outset by the assump-

tion that, alone among the things of this world, Catholicism has never changed. The object of minds so biased is not to grasp the diverse thought of various ages, but to show that all ages thought alike. The Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Maur are, in this respect, much more akin to ourselves, and have done more for the future. Tolerance, the daughter of criticism, was equally unknown at Port-Royal. Its inmates were always unjust to Protestants, and applauded the iniquitous measures taken against them. It is curious to see with what indignation St. Cyran speaks of heretics. On a well-known occasion,* Pascal played the part of informer for the Holy Office. The idea of religious liberty never occurred to these rigid believers: when they declaim against persecution it is always in the name of truth, never in that of liberty.

Was it then without cause that Port-Royal left such a mark and excited so much sympathy? No, indeed. Unimportant, if considered in the light of modern ideas, with which it has little in common, this school was unequalled in the greatness of the characters it formed. Nowhere else have been seen so many brave and loyal spirits devoted absolutely to their ideal of righteousness. Their pride was sublime, and their recognition of the nothingness of worldly greatness and the equality of mankind in misery and sin was truly

* See the 'Vie de Pascal,' by Madame Perrier, pp. 4, 5 of M. Havet's edition, and the judicious remarks of the editor.

Christian. What strength of will they showed, and how noble an example of what the human soul can do when convinced that it possesses the truth! In those days of official grandeur, when the saints themselves acknowledged the mighty of this world to be images of the Deity, and more likely than others to find favour in His eyes, it is comforting to find men thus proclaiming the Christian democracy, and showing this respect for manual labour, this proud contempt, this roughness of behaviour towards the great. Now it is the gardener of the abbey (a converted nobleman) who resists the archbishop, and stoutly argues with him. Again it is M. Singlin who receives with freezing indifference Madame de Guéméné's advances. 'You are not used to this language,' said St. Cyran to Lancelot, then a young recruit. 'In the world people do not speak thus; but here are six feet of earth where we do not fear the chancellor or anyone else. No human power can prevent our speaking the truth.' 'We have a Master,' he says again, 'whom we must serve, and for whose sake we must endure the hatred of men. I wish no harm to those who persecute me, and I have not forgiven the person in question* because he has not offended me. If I were a worthy servant of God, I should not be persecuted, but crushed.'

Thus Port-Royal rises in the midst of the seventeenth century like a triumphal column, a temple

* M. Zamet.

to manliness and truth. Certainly freedom to worship God has had other martyrs. The struggle of Protestantism was more heroic, since it was even unto death. But, in those days, Protestantism had already become a stranger to France. Here it was from French citizens, represented by a few old Parisian families, enlightened and serious minded, that resistance came. The nuns of Port-Royal did more than bishops, more than the Gallican Church, more than the pope himself—they kept conscience alive. With his seraglio insolently paraded before all Christendom, Louis XIV., so far as in him lay, lowered the morality of France to the Oriental level. Fortunately some women resisted him. The admirable saying, 'The king can make princes of the blood,* he may also make martyrs,' is the revenge of a Frenchwoman for the insult she received at Versailles. From Port-Royal proceeded the only opposition Louis XIV. met with at home, the only protest against the encroachments of the government on the province of the mind. Those who think that Richelieu and Louis XIV. started France on the road which was to lead to the Revolution, and after the Revolution to a series of fruitless ventures, cannot prize too highly the school which gave France the only characters which did not bow to the fascination of a power abounding in present seductions and future perils.

* In allusion to the legitimation of the natural children of Louis XIV.

Seen in this light, St. Cyran acquires the proportions of a national hero. One of the merits of M. Sainte-Beuve is to have revealed the grandeur of this wonderful figure, neglected by history because it had none of the external glitter which secures renown. St. Cyran has proved that it is possible to be at the same time an insufferable writer and a noble character. At first sight, it is difficult to understand how the obscure author of unintelligible books could have been the chosen director of the strongest minds of his time, the promoter of a vast intellectual and religious movement, one of those men who exact most from their disciples, and who, the more they exact, are the more beloved. M. Sainte-Beuve explains it all. The special qualities of men powerful in sentiment and action differ widely from those of writers. The writer has many disadvantages in the relations between man and man. The powerful weapons he wields render conversation, correspondence, private exhortation irksome to him. Instead of speaking to one person at a time, he is always tempted to address thousands. A man of speech or action, on the contrary, accustomed to see face to face the person whom he influences, and to realize instantly the effect of his words, does not comprehend the refinement and ramification of written thought. His success depends on the impression he makes upon one individual or a few persons at a time. His discourse must be judged not by absolute rules, but by the fruit

it bears. If, instead of St. Cyran's insipid volumes, we read his conversations and his exhortations as the nuns he directed reported them from memory, the metamorphosis is complete. Thanks to his disciples, the mediocre writer grows eloquent. The thought which by itself could not find expression is all aglow with life when it has traversed the crystal of a sympathetic spirit and received from the souls it influenced the light which without them it did not possess.

Among all the remarkable men produced by the Catholic renaissance which occurred in France about 1600—François de Sales, Vincent de Paul, Olier, Berulle, etc.—St. Cyran was the most logical and vigorous. François de Sales had, no doubt, more vivacity and charm; but his influence on Catholicism in general was unimportant. The laity, unacquainted with mysticism, and accustomed to estimate religion only by its results, will think the career of Vincent de Paul much more fruitful as the founder of the great apostolate of modern Catholicism, that of charity. But religion has an ideal object, distinct from the good it does. The object for which man was created being to realize the highest contemplation of the universe, or in other words the most perfect worship of God, and that object involving of necessity, or (if the expression be preferred) without the will of the Creator, an enormous amount of suffering, every effort to diminish that suffering is work for God.

Only secondary work, however; the greatest alleviation that charity can effect in human misery will be but a negative benefit, without any direct moral value. Man is not intended to live without suffering. One hour of the meditation of St. Theresa or Spinoza is worth a whole day of St. Vincent de Paul. The ascetics and the Stoics of all ages have done their part in the work of the world by reminding man of the stern and lofty sadness of his destiny. In like manner St. Cyran, in probing to the bottom the wounds of the spirit, and austerely enforcing belief in duty, has done as much for mankind as those who are rightly called its benefactors.

His inflexible execution of his design was admirable. He alone thoroughly recognised the great danger of Catholicism, exaggerated obedience, abnegation of conscience, a tendency towards automatic religion. The keen penetration of François de Sales perceived this evil. 'My daughter,' said he to Mère Angélique,* 'we can only weep for this misfortune. To denounce it to the world in its present state would be to provoke useless scandal. These patients love their disease and do not wish to be cured. Œcumenical councils, being above the pope, ought to reform the head and the members. But popes get angry when the Church does not submit entirely to them, although, according to the law of God, the Church is above them when a

* Sainte-Beuve, i., p. 221.

council is canonically assembled. I know this as well as the doctors; but discretion induces me to keep silence, because I hope for no good from speech.' Frederic Borromeo also understood the gravity of the evil. 'Zeal and grief for the disorders of Rome,' said he to M. de Belley,* 'induced me to write a book three fingers thick, where they were nearly all described. But, seeing every door shut against reform, and understanding that God alone could bring it about through His providence, I burned the book, seeing that it was only likely to cause scandal by making public the excesses of those who have no wish to mend their morals, and have become politicians rather than ecclesiastics.'† So they all respectfully veiled their faces. But St. Cyran boldly struck at the root of the mischief. The efficacy of grace alone was the heroic remedy he opposed to an effete and state-ridden Christianity. No compromise was possible. God and the conscience, terrified at the unknown decree which will absolve or condemn it, are face to face. God is incorruptible. The timidity of François de Sales, the compromises of Bossuet, the Jesuitical method of trafficking in salvation, the indulgences of the Borgias and Medicis, become sheer fatuity when contrasted with this bold suppression of all which might excuse frailty or console feebleness.

This was the master-stroke of St. Cyran; here

* Camus, the friend of François de Sales.

† Sainte-Beuve, i., p. 222.

lay the secret of the extraordinary influence he possessed over the minds of his contemporaries. We must not hesitate at the apparent contradiction between a theology which crushes man, and a morality which raises him. The nature of Christianity explains this peculiarity, which occurs several times in the course of its history. The greatest danger to Christianity, the cause which has often relaxed the springs of this great religious machine, has always been the extreme importance it attaches to its official establishment. The priest, the pope, the Church, the saints, are in the Christian organization so important that, unless we are very careful, they threaten to eclipse God Himself, and to monopolize the whole work of salvation. It is certain that a Catholic who wishes to be saved has more to do with the Church than with God. When Richelieu threw St. Cyran into prison for maintaining that the love of God is necessary in *attrition*, the cardinal was not so foolish as he seemed. Had the abbot's doctrine prevailed, Louis XIII., who naïvely confessed that he did not love God, would have slipped through the hands of his confessor, and of the cardinal also. This substitution of man for God, and, if I may venture to say so, this suppression of the Deity, being the great evil which undermines the work of Christ, every reform of Christianity, every awakening of Christian spirit, consists in a return to the strict doctrine of grace. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (the lowest period

of Christianity), the evil reached its height. The Reformation opposed to it the doctrine of justification through Christ. In the seventeenth century, the political influence of Spain and the Jesuits having again eclipsed the faith of St. Paul and of St. Augustine, St. Cyran was the Calvin who took in hand the cause of God. Experience proves that man never uses his liberty better than when he believes himself bound by the dogma of grace. On that occasion this strong reaction produced its usual effects. A manly Christianity appeared as a protest against the weakness and corruption of the official Church; religion became truly spiritual; the simple priest resumed his dignity; there was hope that the Church might cease to be a compromise between popes and kings; a great religious republic, whose fundamental principle was the election of bishops, seemed on the point of being established. It is easy to understand the enthusiasm produced in a little group of believers by that dawn of a Christian renaissance; but it is also easy to foresee the obstacles which beset the new apostles when they attempted to impart to the Universal Church their ideal of a pure Christianity and a strictly spiritual religion.

SECOND ESSAY, AUGUST 30, 1860.

The Jansenist reformation, unlike that of the sixteenth century, only succeeded in schools and monasteries. The fixed resolve of its founders to

remain within the pale of the Church cut it off from a future. Jansenism held out for some time, because Catholicism was still deeply sincere—the fruit of personal convictions; but it was unable to realize any of its aspirations, because the contradiction between the end in view and the means employed was too flagrant. If St. Cyran may be compared to Calvin as regards his doctrinal tendencies, his want of success and his false position in the Church remind one of Lamennais. Like Lamennais, St. Cyran aimed at reforming the Church through the priests and a pious laity, rather than by the ordinary means of the hierarchy. Relying on the attachment they inspired, and the talent and social importance of their disciples, both alike avoided preferment, which would have restricted their spiritual freedom of action, and aspired to rule the Church by means of a central agency undefined in character. That was where they deceived themselves; they overlooked the fact that, in a highly organized society like ours, one can only overthrow a hierarchy by entering it. Both were condemned by the official Church, outside which they wished to place themselves, though acknowledging its divine right; and both fell victims to their simple confidence in the power of naked truth. But the uncertainty of life and the changes in the times made their end very different. St. Cyran died at a critical moment, as though Lamennais had died before the 'Paroles d'un Croyant' appeared. Lamennais outlived him-

self, struggling for twenty years against the weight of his past. St. Cyran's protest was carried on by his disciples; it created a tradition which is scarcely extinct in our days. The school of Lamennais was shattered at one blow, and the sentence which struck the master did not leave him a single disciple. Our century has not faith enough to produce a heresy. The resistance of Jansenism, which so scandalizes the Catholics of our day, proves how active the Christian spirit was in the seventeenth century. Then, people trusted to reason; belief was individual; orthodoxy still left room for private opinion. In our day, faith is the abdication of reason; people accept it, they do not acquire it. In such a state of things a sect is an absurdity. The principle of authority has now assumed such proportions that to resist the Catholic Church is to break with her. Rebellion is the only possible form of opposition; remonstrance is justly looked upon as temerity.

This is the great lesson in religious history taught us by Port-Royal. The failure of St. Cyran should discourage for ever those who dream of reforming Catholicism without quitting it. Jansenism will be the last of the heresies; Port-Royal the last feudal castle stormed by Catholic unity. Orthodoxy triumphed on its ruins; it must take care: when monarchic unity triumphed in the extinction of the last vestige of local independence, it was on the eve of the Revolution. The awful silence enforced by

Catholicism reminds me, I know not why, of France under Louis XV. Catholicism will perish in a convulsion which will be in religion what the Revolution was in politics. If it falls, it will fall because it has stifled within its breast all life and speech.

To sum up, the influence Port-Royal exercised over France was purely literary. The Port-Royal style, simple, severely true, even when rather slovenly, is a kind of prose which most resembles that of the ancients. I do not entirely share M. Sainte-Beuve's preference for the style of the Academy to that of the Port-Royal recluses. The best work is that which shows no literary afterthought, which does not make one suspect that the author wrote for the sake of writing, which has not the slightest flavour of rhetoric. And, in the seventeenth century, Port-Royal was the only place where rhetoric did not penetrate. The rigid rule of those perfect Christians had an excellent effect in this respect; they would have suspected themselves of vanity and mistrust of grace had they adorned truth with frivolous ornaments. They were, it is true, deficient in poetry, unless it be that poetry of the soul which is deepest when it least expresses itself. Santeuil's Latin verse, which they inspired or at least admired, has the same effect on me as Boileau's odes; the age of Christian poetry was past. But thought, temperate, self-restrained, and well-regulated, was never better expressed. Pascal himself, who is

certainly not indebted to them for his genius, owes his truthfulness to them. Had he been brought up in the Academical school, he would not, I think, have been so free from affectation. The usual note of the Academical prose of the seventeenth century is that of Seneca. The fine effect produced by the works of that able rhetorician when translated into French, and even by the tragic declamations ascribed to him, always alarmed me. Seneca—we must beware of the fact—is our model; when our style is pitched in his key it is considered sober. Port-Royal alone knew the simplicity of antiquity, the style that exactly fits the thought, and like a well-made garment leaves everyone his own figure, not giving an air of genius to those devoid of it, nor seeking any other elegance than that of suitability.

The destruction of that grand school of virtue and common-sense is one of the most inexcusable acts of Louis XIV.'s government. Never was there a more painful instance of the chief defect of centralized countries, whatever their constitution may be—the jealous hatred of independence evinced by the state. St. Cyran was *un homme sans prises*, with whom neither caresses nor threats availed. He refused a bishopric; and despotic powers always regard as seditious those whom they cannot bribe. He was arrested! 'The late Cardinal Richelieu was then at Compiègne,' the Archbishop of Paris said to the nuns; 'I was master of his bed-chamber; he sent for me, and

said, "Beaumont, I have done to-day a thing for which a great many people will blame me. By order of the king I had the Abbé de St. Cyran arrested. I foresee that all learned and good people will be incensed with me, for it must be granted the abbé belongs to both classes. So all who know him, and many persons of quality whose director he is, will think I have done a great injustice. . . ." And the cardinal added, "Whatever may be said of me on this occasion, I am convinced both the State and the Church ought to be grateful for the service I have rendered them. For I am told that the abbé holds peculiar and dangerous opinions, which might some day cause scandal and discord in the Church; and it is one of my maxims that whatever unsettles religion will also disturb the State, to prevent which is a signal service to both."'

This error of the great cardinal was repeated with additions in the following reign. More and more the State became the universal peacemaker, preventing divisions by extinguishing that which makes life worth living—freedom of thought. The government considered that it was responsible for all that was said or done in the kingdom; so much so, that no convent could reform itself, and no religious quarrel could be settled without its interference. Port-Royal, it must be admitted, furnished the pretext for all this interference. Mère Angélique made a very French mistake, when, unable to attain her ideal of austere dis-

cipline under the '*good customs*' of Citeaux, she solicited the Court of Rome to place her convent under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary. At first sight, what could have been more proper? The '*good customs*' of Citeaux, which the lax party desired to maintain, were what are called *abuses*. The holy abbess, no doubt, believed that, in appealing to the king and the pope to destroy them, she was performing an act of Christian policy. She had not yet learnt by hard experience that abuses are better than reforms when the latter are due to administrative intervention and an appeal to distant powers. The fall of Port-Royal was the consequence. To escape the laxities of the Cistercian rule they submitted to the archbishop: that was submitting to the Court. Port-Royal was defenceless on the day when its independence gave offence, and when the Court realized that within its walls were minds capable of thinking for themselves.

The littleness of the motives which guided Louis XIV. on this occasion would be incredible were it not attested by the very persons who carried out his orders. Pressed by the nuns, M. de Hardy at last avowed them. 'Good heavens!' he cried; 'cannot you understand? People are always talking about Port-Royal; the king does not like what makes so much noise. A little while ago he told M. Arnauld that he objected to his holding meetings at home; that there would be no harm in his seeing all sorts of people like anybody

else; but why were certain persons always meeting at his house; and why had he so much to do with them? If he wrote books, he could easily take the advice of those public persons whose business it is to give it: why should he always want to be in communication with those gentlemen? The king will not have any association: a body without a head is always dangerous in the State; he wants to do away with it, and not to hear people continually talking about "Those gentlemen — those gentlemen of Port-Royal!" He repeated eight or ten times the phrase "association" (*ralliement*), and applied it to everyone. "Not that we blame any of those persons individually," he took care to remark; "on the contrary, taken individually, one may say they are all good; but when they associate together you have a body without a head." '

Thus the true crime of Port-Royal was its importance. It formed a society sufficient to itself and living by itself. That constituted a sort of challenge from the recluses to the king. Louis declared that 'he would put an end to the cabal; that it was his own affair, and concerned his own person; and that, in dealing with it, he would be more Jesuitic than the Jesuits.' He kept his word. A poor old nun, on her deathbed, having expressed a wish to see her banished confessor, the archbishop was appealed to. The prelate replied 'that he could not presume to grant the request, as it rested entirely with

the king; that if they liked he would speak to the king, but that he was certain beforehand that the king would refuse.'

The Duc de Luynes had two daughters at Port-Royal. Colbert advised him to remove them, saying 'that nothing would be done for the other children so long as those two remained at Port-Royal; and that those persons whose daughters were being educated there must not expect to be welcome at Court. It is strange,' added Colbert, 'that I have so often spoken of this to you, yet you never trouble yourself about it: you have seven children; you ought to think of them.'

The Duc de Luynes removed his two daughters. President Guedreville wished to know the cause of these severe measures. He asked the archbishop whether anything objectionable had been noticed in the education at Port-Royal. As usual, the archbishop began a pompous eulogium on the holy house. The president having insisted. 'Why, sir, you do not understand me,' replied the archbishop; 'that is the very reason why these measures were resorted to. The convent enjoyed too great a reputation. Persons of quality entrusted their daughters to these nuns; people went about saying how well satisfied they were: thus new friends were made who joined with the friends of the convent and formed a party opposed to the State. The king could not allow this; he believes that such unions are dangerous

in a State; this is what he is resolved to put down.' Pressed again to explain himself, the archbishop summed up as follows the grievances against Port-Royal: 'The first was the intercourse carried on by those gentlemen with strangers from all countries; the second, that, outside Port-Royal des Champs, there were lodgings which would accommodate two hundred people; the third, that, though the revenue of the monastery was but limited, a large community lived there, which gave rise to conjectures that the nuns must be assisted by their friends; and the king was afraid that those alms might be applied to purposes which would not please him.'

What a fatal conclusion is this from the principles of despotism! Here is a sovereign possessing rare gifts, here is the master of Europe, on the morrow of the Treaty of Nimèguen, occupied with the pious coteries of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, spying into the relations between his subjects, waging war against a convent where a few of the elect have attracted some harmless followers. Certainly the exaggerated vanity which was one of the most conspicuous faults of Louis XIV. was responsible for much of this meanness. But I am still more struck by the false position of a sovereign compelled by the principles he represents to stoop to such tricks.* Even if Louis XIV. had been free

* I find in the 'Journal inédit' of the Marquis de Torcy, recently published by M. Frédéric Masson (Paris, 1884),

from all personal weakness, circumstances would still have made him a theologian. A monarch invested with the absolute authority of the State must have an opinion on every point and the last word on every subject. The atrocious persecution of the Protestants, the severity shown to Port-Royal, the ridiculous persistence with which the king pressed for Rome's judgment in the affair of the Quietists, were deplorable but perfectly logical. The principle of State supremacy was pushed to such a point that a popular boarding-school had become the rival of royalty and a danger to society.

It is such enormities as these that explain the sudden collapse of a brilliant, refined, and enlightened society, which in one day is shattered completely and for ever—a collapse unparalleled since the days of the Sassanidæ.* Superficial thinkers have agreed to accept this government as an ideal one for France, and those who hold it

---

the following account of the opening sittings of one of the king's councils (Nov. 10th, 1709), at which some most important business was transacted: 'When I began reading the despatches, the king said that a sort of miracle had taken place at Amiens. One of the nuns from Port-Royal des Champs . . . had expressed great repentance for her obstinacy. . . . She eventually died like a saint in sorrow and penitence.' The story which reached the king respecting the retractation of the old nun was at least doubtful. Dom Clémencet, 'Histoire générale de Port-Royal,' vol. ix., p. 502 and fol.

* The name of a Persian dynasty, from Sassan, its founder. —TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

responsible for the ordeal through which she afterwards passed are regarded as cavillers. People forget that this government purchased its ephemeral greatness at the cost of the future. The Revolution only carried on its criminal policy: the violent extinction of individual development, the pursuit of a fatal uniformity—in a word, the principle that everything which can unite men is a crime against the State. The remotest generations will reap the fruits of this short-sighted policy. All evils can be cured except the abnegation of self. Individualities once destroyed by the State cannot reconstitute themselves; for the liberties which the State has once absorbed it never restores.

A sad thought haunts us constantly while we read this beautiful story so skilfully told by M. Sainte-Beuve. These holy men and women who, in the midst of the seventeenth century, revived the days of antiquity, and made a Thebaid close to Versailles—what purpose have they served? The reforms, to carry out which they did violence to nature, trampled under foot legitimate instincts, defied common-sense, and invited anathemas, appear puerile to us. Their ideal of life is not ours. We are in favour of the abuses they reformed, and Sister Morel, who so long scandalized the whole establishment by refusing to give up her little garden, does not seem very guilty in our eyes. Moreover, seeing how they hold apart from human life, how unmoved they are by

its joys and its sorrows, we miss something in them, and their perfection seems to border on heartlessness. Le Maître de Sacy confessing his mother on her death-bed, St. Françoise de Chantal forsaking her children to follow François de Sales, Madame de Maintenon stealing daughters from their mother for the salvation of their souls, appear to us to sin against nature. What purpose, then, do the saints serve us? What purpose did the Stoics serve? What purpose was served by all those noble souls in the fading past? What purpose was served by those Indian Buddhists, so meek that their opponents succeeded in effacing every trace of them? If we held to a narrow conception of human life, we could never dispel these doubts. The most sublime miracles of patience and devotion have been fruitless; but when we understand what duty is, we come to believe that in morality the effort is more valuable than the result. The result holds good for time only; the effort holds good for eternity. Living witnesses to the transcendental nature of man, the saints are thus the corner-stone of the world and the foundation of our hopes. They make immortality necessary; thanks to them, moral despondency and practical scepticism can be triumphantly refuted. Sister Marie-Claire, exclaiming 'Victory! victory!' with her last breath, may have been sustained by a faith which is no longer ours; but she proved that man by his will creates a force the law of which is not the law of

the flesh; she set forth the nature of the spirit by an argument superior to all those of Descartes, and, in showing us the soul quitting the body as a ripe fruit drops from its stalk, she taught us not to pronounce too lightly on the limits of its destiny.

THIRD ESSAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1867.

During a painful illness courageously borne, M. Sainte-Beuve has finished his third edition of his 'History of Port-Royal.'* Some years ago, I said what I thought of this admirable book, a masterpiece of criticism and art, and a model of the style in which religious history should be written. The right of passing judgment on this new edition belongs to a more competent critic, one to whom the subject of Port-Royal is a sort of inheritance.† It is enough to say, for the present, that M. Sainte-Beuve has made valuable additions to his work. Some subordinate personages have been dealt with more in detail. The author has received from the Jansenist Church of Holland documents of great interest. From amongst the bitter attacks on Port-Royal in the recently published 'Mémoires' of Père Rapin, M. Sainte-Beuve has extracted some curious information. M. de Chantelauze has kindly anticipated the publication of the work on which he is engaged, and communicated to the eminent

* 'Port-Royal,' six volumes, 8vo. Hachette.

† M. de Sacy. The three essays reproduced here appeared in the *Journal des Débats*.

historian a long paper on the relations between Cardinal de Retz and the Jansenists, which sets that singular ecclesiastic in a new light. The account of M. de Pontchâteau, received from the Jansenists of Utrecht, is extremely interesting; it gives a grand and simple picture of the life and death of a saint. The work also contains unpublished and important information on Nicole, Racine, and M. Olier.

What M. Sainte-Beuve, with great justice, especially insists upon is the national significance of Port-Royal and the kind of interest it possesses for us. Port-Royal is one of the glories of France. It is the best contradiction to those who pretend that our country is incapable of being serious. Port-Royal was an attempt to make France an enlightened, honest, truth-loving nation, more anxious to be than to appear as Germany and Holland are. Had it succeeded, we should have had neither the regency, nor what was superficial in the philosophy of the eighteenth century, nor the Revolution, nor neo-Catholicism. The men of that school were very thorough Christians; they were at least learned and intelligent Christians, and nothing more is required. Certainly Tillemont's criticism is narrow and timid, but it is perfectly conscientious. If that sincere school had continued, it would soon have attained complete independence. To derive Christian Baur from Le Nain de Tillemont two generatations of savants are necessary. Freedom of

thought proceeds either from want of religion or from being serious about religion. Respecting M. le Tourneux, accused of a tendency to deism, M. Sainte-Beuve says: 'A Jansenist, far from doubting the divinity of Jesus Christ, would believe in it doubly.' Assuredly; but the Jansenist's belief was the result of a serious exercise of reason. And the same serious exercise of reason may perhaps bring his grandson to believe nothing at all. When we profess a dogma in consequence of our own reflections, we are not far from ceasing to profess it and from avowing the change. It is only in politics and matters of routine that we never doubt, or rather never avow our doubts. The descendants of the Quakers are often, in our days, more enlightened Protestants than the orthodox flock. An intellectual culture, akin to that of German universities, might have proceeded from Port-Royal, or rather from the mental and moral influence of that great society. The result of the Jesuits' teachings was Voltaire.

I own that to Port-Royal I prefer the French Protestant school, such as it became from the reign of Henri IV. to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But that school alienated itself from us; it completely abandoned French traditions; it produced few writers (an unpardonable sin in France). Port-Royal, on the contrary, may be our model in every respect. First of all, the language of the writers of Port-Royal is perfection. It possesses the crowning merit of prose,

that which includes all others: it is natural. Its sole aim is to express its meaning clearly, without making any display. This has raised it above all scientific and intellectual revolutions. On the deepest subjects we think differently from these great prose-writers of the seventeenth century; their ideas in history and philosophy do not satisfy us; but their language is always sufficient. It may equally well express thoughts opposed to theirs, for its only law is good sense, the love of clearness and truth. The qualities which make good writers also, strange to say, make saints. The capital defect in writing as much as in morals is self-love and the desire to shine: forgetfulness of self and scorn of consequences are the golden rule in all things.

The method of tuition at Port-Royal is also worthy of imitation. Its schools were far superior to those of the Jesuits. Our University, unfortunately, too faithfully copied the latter with their artificial processes, only aiming at college honours; their science, which is no training of the intellect, but merely a' superficial veneer; their recipes for shining in competitive examinations; their scholarship shut up in note-books and extracts, but never bringing the pupil face to face with antiquity.

Above all, the spirit of the Port-Royalists should inspire the few men in France who still protest against false taste. We may not share their religious convictions; but we should endeavour to resemble them in everything except their faith.

'Do not you see,' some one may reply, 'that this is asking for the effect without the cause? That faith was the origin of their strength, their earnestness, their self-sacrifice.' Alas! can it be true that nothing great or lasting is to be achieved without obstinate convictions, narrow ideas, and violent prejudices? Is the free intellect condemned to be powerless in politics, virtue, and art? Do not let us exaggerate. 'Religion alone,' says Fontenelle, 'has sometimes made wonderful conversions; but it seldom makes an equable and consistent life, unless grafted upon a philosophical nature.' In moral force, self-control and literary austerity, M. Littré rivals the noblest characters of Port-Royal, yet he has not any of their faith. In the universities and academies of Germany there are Le Nain de Tillemonts who do not believe in the supernatural. That 'circumcision of heart and mind,' to which M. Sainte-Beuve justly points as the essential feature of the pious ascetics whose history he has written, is more the effect of race and education than of this or that abstract symbol. Who now love and defend those great men of other days? We, whom they would certainly have looked upon as libertines.

Let us then thank M. Sainte-Beuve for having given us this touching picture of sublime virtues, of courageous struggles animated by the love of truth. To write a good history of a sect, of a school, of a church, one must love it, but one must not belong to it. M. Sainte-Beuve fulfils

these conditions. His sympathy for Port-Royal is not dogmatic. It leaves his judgment free. Among the additions which increase the value of this new edition, the finest is perhaps the farewell of the author to his heroes. Gibbon tells us how sad he felt when he wrote the last lines of his great history in his garden at Lausanne. One day in the month of August, 1857, having just completed his work, the author of 'Port-Royal' took up the pen again to write, by way of conclusion, the following pages:

'I have finished this history, begun so long ago, and from which, whatever my apparent occupations might be, I have never really separated myself—this faithful description of a race of holy men.

'What was my aim? What have I done? What have I gained?

'Young, restless, suffering, prompted by loving curiosity to seek for hidden beauty, my chief aim was, at first, by penetrating the mystery of these pious souls, of these secluded lives, to gather the poetry which pervaded them. But scarcely had I advanced one step when that poetry vanished or gave place to sterner aspects: I saw nothing but their religion in all its severity, their Christianity in all its bareness.

'It was impossible for me to enter into that religion except as its student and expounder. I pleaded for it before the unbelievers and scoffers; I pleaded on behalf of *grace;* I pleaded on behalf of *penitence;* I exhibited its lofty side, venerable in its austerity, even lovable in its tenderness; I endeavoured to measure its degrees; I counted the steps of Jacob's ladder. This was the limit of my part, this the fruit of my labours.

'You wise and learned directors, illustrious recluses, righteous confessors and priests, virtuous laymen who also might

have been priests but presumed not to aspire to the altar, you good men all and true, whatever respect I vowed to you, with whatever devotion I studied the least vestige you left behind, I could not place myself in your ranks. If you were still alive, if you could return to earth, should I throw myself at your feet? I might perhaps visit you once or twice as a duty, and also to verify the accuracy of my portraits; but I should not be your disciple. I have been your biographer, I dare not say your limner; in this sense only am I yours.

'What I should like to think I have done is at least to bring others to the point I have myself reached in regard to you, that is, to appreciate your virtues and your merits as well as your peculiarities, to perceive your greatness and your miseries, what is healthy in you and what is unhealthy (for you too are not whole)—in a word, through the contemplation of your features to kindle and to feel that spark which is called divine, though it shines but for a moment, and then leaves the mind as free, as serene in its coldness, as impartial as before.

'A still greater advantage might perhaps have been derived from intercourse with you, a practical and moral advantage. While I studied you, I suffered; but my suffering had nothing elevating in it. I was more engrossed with my wounded vanity than with your troubles. I did not imitate you. I never dreamed, as you did, of laying at the foot of the Cross (which is only the most tangible form of the idea of God) the disappointments, nay, the humiliation and injustice which I experienced through you and on your account.

'For all that I have done, I have been and I am but an investigator, a sincere, attentive, and exact observer. Moreover, as I progressed, the charm having vanished, I did not wish to be anything else. It seemed to me that in default of the poetic flame which illumines but which decoys, there could be no more legitimate and honourable employment for the mind than to see men and things as they are, and to describe them as we see them; to depict, in the cause of science, the varieties of the species, the many forms assumed by human nature, as modified by social restrictions and the artificial web of doctrine. And what doctrine could be more

artificial than yours? You have always talked about truth, and have sacrificed everything to what appeared to you to be true: in my own way I have also been a man of truth, so far as I was able to discern it.

'But how little is that after all! How limited is our sight! how soon extinguished! how like a pale torch kindled for a moment in the middle of a boundless night! And he whose heart was most set on knowing his subject, who was most ambitious to seize it, who took most pride in portraying it—how powerless, how unequal to his task does he feel on the day when, as he sees his work almost finished and its fruit gathered, his enthusiasm passes off, and is succeeded by that loss of strength and of the power of enjoyment which is inevitable as the end approaches, when he perceives that he too is but one of the most transitory illusions in a world of illusion.

Could better words be found for a sage of the gentle school of Ecclesiastes, who, not in sceptical bitterness, but from mature experience, used to cry unceasingly: 'All is vanity'?

SPINOZA.

A CONFERENCE HELD AT THE HAGUE, FEBRUARY 12, 1877, THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF SPINOZA'S DEATH.

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,* LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—On this day two hundred years ago, at about this time in the afternoon, and a few yards from this spot, there died, at forty-three years of age, a poor man whose life had been so profoundly silent that his last breath was scarcely heard. He occupied an out-of-the-way room on the quiet quay of Pavilioengracht, in the house of a worthy citizen who revered without understanding him. On the morning of his death he visited his host and hostess as usual. They had been to divine service; the gentle philosopher talked with the good people of what the minister had said, approved of his advice, and counselled them to follow it. The host and hostess (let us name them, gentlemen, for their honest sincerity deserves a place in this idyl of the Hague, related by Colerus), Van der Spyk and his wife, returned to their devotions. When they came

* His Royal Highness Prince Alexander of the Netherlands.

home their kindly guest was dead. The funeral took place on the 25th of February, as though he had been a good Christian, in the new church on the Spuy. All the neighbours regretted the sage who had lived amongst them as one of themselves. His hosts cherished his memory, and those who had known him always spoke of him with the customary epithet as 'the blessed Spinoza.'

Anyone able to discern the current of opinion among the 'enlightened' Pharisees of the time, would have seen this philosopher, so beloved by the simple and the pure of heart, becoming by a strange contradiction the bugbear of the narrow orthodoxy which pretended to have a monopoly of truth. A rogue, a scourge, an imp of Satan, the most wicked atheist, a man steeped in crime—such, in the opinion of sound theologians and philosophers, was the recluse of Pavilioengracht. Portraits of him were scattered about, which represented him as 'bearing on his face the signs of reprobation.' A great philosopher, as daring as himself, though less consistent and sincere, called him 'a wretch.' But justice had its turn. When towards the end of the eighteenth century, in Germany especially, a more moderate theology and a broader philosophy came in vogue, Spinoza was hailed as the precursor of a new Gospel. Jacobi let the public into the secret of a conversation he had with Lessing, whom he had visited in the hope that he would come to his assistance against Spinoza. What was his sur-

prise at finding Lessing an avowed Spinozist! 'Ἓν καὶ πᾶν,' he said, 'that is the whole of philosophy.' The man who for a century had been called an atheist, Novalis declared 'intoxicated with God.' His long-forgotten books are published and eagerly sought for. Schleiermacher, Goethe, Hegel, Schelling, proclaim Spinoza the father of modern thought. Perhaps there was some exaggeration in the first impulse of tardy reparation; but time, which puts all things in their right places, has confirmed Lessing's verdict, and to-day all enlightened thinkers admit that Spinoza had more spiritual insight than any of his contemporaries. It is in that belief, gentlemen, that you have assembled to do honour to a humble grave. It is the common affirmation of an unfettered faith in the infinite which to-day unites, on the very spot which witnessed so much virtue, the choicest assemblage which could gather round the tomb of a man of genius. A sovereign, as distinguished by the gifts of her mind as by the qualities of her heart, is with us in spirit. A prince, capable of appreciating every kind of merit, testifies by his presence, which adds special *éclat* to this solemnity, that none of Holland's glories are indifferent to him, and that no thought, however lofty, can escape his enlightened judgment, his philosophic admiration.

I.

The illustrious Baruch Spinoza was born at Amsterdam at the time when your republic reached the climax of its glory and power. He belonged to that great race which, by the influence it has exercised and the services it has rendered, occupies so exceptional a place in the history of civilization. A miracle in its own way, the development of the Jewish people takes its place side by side with that other miracle, the development of the Greek mind; for if Greece was the first to realize the ideal of poetry, of science, of philosophy, of art, of secular life (if I may so express myself), the Jewish people created the religion of mankind. Its prophets inaugurated the idea of justice, and vindicated the rights of the weak, a vindication all the harder for them, because, having no idea of a future state, they dreamed of the realisation of their ideal upon this earth and in a near future. A Jew—Isaiah—750 years before Christ, dared to say that sacrifices availed nothing, and that *purity* of heart was alone important. Then, when the course of events has utterly destroyed those bright visions, Israel effects a change of front without parallel. Transferring to the province of *pure* idealism that kingdom of God never to be established on earth, one half of his sons founded Christianity, while the other half, amidst the stakes and faggots of the Middle Ages, imperturbably repeated, 'Hear, O Israel!

Jehovah, thy God, is the only God; holy is His name.' This potent tradition of idealism, of hoping against hope, this was the healthy and bracing atmosphere in which Spinoza was brought up. His education was at first exclusively Jewish. The literature of Israel was his first and in truth his constant mistress, the subject of his meditation all his life long.

As is usually the case, Hebrew literature, when it took the character of a sacred book, became the subject of a conventional exegesis, whose object was less to interpret ancient texts according to the meaning of their authors than to adapt them to the moral and religious wants of the times. The penetrating mind of the young Spinoza soon saw the defects in the exegesis of the synagogues. The Bible as it was taught to him was disfigured by the accumulated errors of more than two thousand years. He resolved to pierce through them. At heart he was in accord with the true fathers of Judaism, especially the great Maimonides,* who

* Maimonides (Moses ben Maimoun, in Arabic, Abou Amran Monça ben Maimoun ben Obeidallah), a Jewish philosopher born at Cordova, 30th March, 1135, died in 1204. According to some authorities, he was a pupil of Averrhoes (Ibn Roschd). By way of distinction he has been called 'The Doctor,' and 'The Eagle of the Doctors.' He was a skilful linguist and physician. Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, appointed him his physician. Albert and Thomas Aquinas were his disciples. His chief works are a 'Commentary on the Mishna,' in Arabic; a 'Compendium of the Talmud, 'Jad Chazekeh,' or the 'Strong Hand;' 'More Nevochim,' or

had leavened Judaism with the strongest and boldest philosophy. With marvellous sagacity he foresaw the great critical exegesis which, a hundred and twenty-five years later, was to acquaint the world with the finest productions of Hebrew genius. Was that destroying the Bible? Has that invaluable book lost anything by being seen as it is, instead of being banished beyond the pale of the common laws of humanity? Certainly not. The truths which science reveals always surpass the dreams which it destroys. Laplace's world is more beautiful than that of a Cosmas Indicopleustes,* representing the universe as a box, on the lid of which the stars move in grooves at a few leagues' distance from us. In like manner

'Guide of the Perplexed;' a Compendium of the works of Galen; a Commentary upon the Aphorisms of Hippocrates (two Hebrew MSS. of which are preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and in that of the Vatican), etc.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

* Cosmas, an Egyptian merchant living in the sixth century of the Christian era: having made several voyages to India, he acquired the surname of 'Indicopleustes' (the Indian navigator). He wrote several works, amongst them a 'Description of the Earth,' now lost, 'Astronomical Tables,' and a 'Christian Topography.' The only work of his which has reached us is his 'Christian Topography,' in Greek, containing curious details relative to India and Ceylon. In it the author, in the name of the Bible, denies the sphericity of the earth, which he asserts to be an oblong plane 12,000 miles in length from east to west, and 6,000 in breadth from north to south, surrounded by high walls, covered by the firmament as with a canopy or vault.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

the Bible is more beautiful when we trace in it, on a background of a thousand years, every sigh, every aspiration, every prayer of the most profoundly religious minds the world has ever known, than when we force ourselves to regard it as a book unlike any other book, written, preserved, and interpreted in defiance of all the ordinary rules of the human mind.

But mediæval persecutions had their usual results. The Jewish mind grew narrow and timid. Some years before, at Amsterdam, the unfortunate Uriel Acosta was cruelly punished for doubts which fanaticism deemed as criminal as avowed infidelity. The audacity of the young Spinoza met with an even worse reception. He was anathematized and excommunicated. A very old story this, gentlemen! Religious communities, beneficent cradles of so much piety and virtue, cannot endure any attempt to pass beyond their bounds; they would imprison for ever the life whose beginnings they have sheltered; they regard as apostasy the natural effort of the new-fledged spirit to fly alone. It is like the egg accusing of ingratitude the bird that has escaped from it. The egg is necessary for a time; then it becomes a hindrance and must be broken. Marvellous indeed that Erasmus should have felt cramped in his cell, that Luther should not have preferred his monastic vows to the more holy vow which binds every man to follow truth! Had Erasmus persisted in his monastic routine, or Luther con-

tinued to distribute 'indulgences,' they would indeed have been apostates. Spinoza was the greatest of modern Jews, and Judaism exiled him; so it had to be; so it always will be. Finite symbols, prisons of the infinite spirit, protest eternally against the efforts of idealism to enlarge them. The spirit on its side struggles eternally for air and light. Eighteen hundred and fifty years ago Judaism denounced as a false guide him who would have made Judaism the first religion of the world. And the Christian Church, how often has not she expelled from her bosom those children who would have done her most honour! In such cases we have amply done our duty, gentlemen, if we gratefully remember the education we received in our infancy. The old churches are at liberty to call those who leave them sacrilegious; they will obtain from us no sentiment but gratitude; for, after all, the harm they can do to us is nothing compared to the good they have done to us.

II.

Behold, then, the excommunicated of the Amsterdam synagogue obliged to build himself a spiritual abode outside the house which has expelled him! He had great sympathy with Christianity; but he had learnt to dread all chains, and did not embrace it. The enlightened rationalism of Descartes had revived philosophy; Descartes was Spinoza's master; he took up the problems

of the age where that great genius had left them; he saw that fear of the Sorbonne had made Descartes' theology hard and dry. When Oldenburg asked what fault he found with Descartes' and Bacon's philosophy, Spinoza said their chief defect was that they did not sufficiently consider the First Cause. Perhaps his reminiscences of Jewish theology, that ancient wisdom of the Hebrews for which he often shows his reverence, gave him higher views and loftier aspirations. No conception of the Deity seemed to him adequate —neither that held by the people nor that formed in the schools. He saw that the infinite could not be limited; that divinity must be all or nothing; that if it were really anything, it must pervade everything. For twenty years he pondered over those problems. Our dislike of abstract systems prevents our accepting unreservedly the propositions in which he believed he had formulated the secrets of the infinite. To Spinoza as to Descartes the universe was nothing but extension and thought; chemistry and physiology were wanting to that great school, too exclusively geometrical and mechanical. Unacquainted with the ideas of life and of the constitution of bodies revealed by chemistry, and still too much attached to the scholastic expressions *substance* and *attribute*, Spinoza had no vision of that living and fruitful infinite which the science of nature and of history shows us directing in boundless space a constantly progressive

development. Yet, apart from some crudity of expression, what grandeur there is in that inflexible geometrical deduction, resulting in the conclusion: 'It is in the nature of substance to develop itself necessarily through an infinity of infinite attributes, infinitely modified'! God is thus absolute thought, the universal consciousness. The ideal exists; nay, it is the only true existence; all else is illusion. Bodies and souls are pure *modes*, whose substance is God; modes alone are in time; substance is eternal. On this theory, God has not to be proved—His existence follows from His idea: everything involves and presupposes Him. God is the condition of all existence, of every thought. If God did not exist, thought could conceive more than nature could supply, which is a contradiction.

Spinoza did not clearly grasp universal progress; the world, as he conceived it, appears crystallized in a matter which is indestructible space, in a soul which is immutable thought; exclusive contemplation of the divine unfits him for comprehending the human: lost in infinity, he did not sufficiently discern the divinity which is hidden under temporal manifestations: but no one has so clearly seen the eternal identity which serves as the basis of all transitory evolution. Everything limited seemed to him frivolous and unworthy of a philosopher's attention. In his daring flight, he attained the lofty snow-clad mountain-tops, without one glance at the richly

blooming vales below. On those heights where any other lungs than his would be suffocated, he lives, he enjoys: there he breathes freely as the generality of men do in the milder climate of temperate regions. He delights in the sharp and bracing air of the glacier. He asks no one to follow him there; he is like Moses, to whom holy mysteries were unveiled on the mountain. But believe me, gentlemen, he was the seer of his age—the man who had the deepest and keenest perception of God.

III.

Isolated on those snowy summits, he must have been astray in human affairs, an optimist or a scornful sceptic? No such thing, gentlemen. He was constantly occupied in applying his principles to human societies. The pessimism of Hobbes and the dreams of Thomas More were equally repugnant to him. One half at least of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, published in 1670, might be reprinted to-day without losing any of its pertinence. Listen to the admirable title: 'Tractatus theologico-politicus, continens dissertationes aliquot quibus ostenditur libertatem philosophandi non tantum salva pietate et reipublicæ pace posse concedi sed eamdem nisi cum pace reipublicæ ipsaque pietate coli non posse.' For centuries people had believed that society was based on metaphysical dogmas; but Spinoza saw that the dogmas believed to be indispensable to humanity

could not escape discussion; and that revelation itself, if there be a revelation, having reached us through human channels, must be equally open to criticism. I wish I could quote the whole of that admirable twentieth chapter, in which the great writer, with magisterial dignity, enunciates the dogma, unknown then and disputed still, which is called liberty of conscience: 'The ultimate purpose of the State,' he says, 'is not to rule men, to keep them in fear, to subject them to the will of others, but, on the contrary, to allow each as far as possible to live in security, that is, to preserve for each his natural right to live without harm to himself or to his neighbour. No, I repeat, the object of the State is not to transform reasonable beings into animals or automata; its object is to enable the citizens to develop in security their bodies and their minds, freely to employ their reason. The true end of the State therefore is liberty. . . . Whoever respects the sovereign's rights must not act against his decrees; yet everybody has a right to think what he likes, and to say what he thinks, provided that he confines himself to speaking and teaching in the name of reason alone, and does not introduce innovations into the State on his own private authority. For instance, a citizen proves that a law is opposed to sound reason and thinks that it ought therefore to be rescinded; if he submits his opinion to the judgment of the sovereign—to whom alone belongs the right of making and abolishing laws—and if

in the meantime he does not break the law, he certainly acts like a good citizen and deserves well of the State.

Even if it be possible to enslave men to such an extent that they dare not utter a word without the approbation of their sovereign, nothing can control their thoughts. What then will follow? Men will think one way and speak another. Good faith, so essential to a State, will decay; adulation and perfidy will flourish, to the destruction of all good and healthy habits. . . . What can be more fatal to a State than to exile honest citizens because they do not hold the opinions of the crowd and know not how to dissemble? What can be more fatal than to destroy as enemies men whose only crime is independence of thought? Then the scaffold, which should be the terror of the wicked, becomes the glorious theatre where tolerance and virtue shine out in all their brightness and in the sight of all men cover the sovereign majesty with disgrace. Truly that spectacle can only teach us either to imitate those noble martyrs, or, if we fear death, to become the abject flatterers of the great. Nothing, therefore, can be so dangerous as to make divine right the arbitrator of pure speculation, and to impose laws upon opinions which are or may be the subject of discussion among men. If the right of the State were limited to the control of acts and speech were left free, controversies would not so often turn into conspiracies.'

Wiser than many so-called practical men, our speculator sees that reasonable governments alone are durable, and tolerant governments alone are reasonable. Far from absorbing the individual in the State, he would create solid guarantees against its omnipotence. He is not a revolutionist, he is a moderate ; he transforms, he explains, he does not destroy. His God is not one of those who delight in ceremonies, in sacrifices, in the smell of incense: and yet Spinoza in nowise wishes to overthrow religion; he has a profound and tender veneration for Christianity. The supernatural is meaningless to him; according to his principles, anything beyond nature would be beyond existence, and consequently could not be conceived; prophets were men like other men. 'To believe,' he says, 'that prophets had human bodies and not human souls, and that consequently their knowledge and their sensations were different from ours, is not to think, it is to dream.' Prophecy was not the monopoly of one nation, of the Jewish people. To be the Son of God was not the privilege of one man. '. . . To speak plainly, it is not absolutely necessary for salvation to know Christ according to the flesh; but it is quite a different matter if we speak of the Son of God, that is, of that eternal wisdom of God, manifested in all things, but especially in the human soul, and above all in Jesus Christ. Without that wisdom none can ever attain to beatitude, since it alone teaches us what is true

or false, good or evil. . . . As to the teachings of certain Churches, I have expressly said that I do not know what they mean, and I confess they seem to me to use the same sort of language as one who should maintain that a circle had put on the nature of a square.' Has Schleiermacher spoken differently? And is not Spinoza, who, with Richard Simon, was the founder of the Biblical exegesis of the Old Testament, also the precursor of the liberal theologians who in our day have shown that Christianity can preserve all its influence without the supernatural? His letters to Oldenburg on the resurrection and the way in which St. Paul understood it, are masterpieces which, a hundred and fifty years later, would have been looked upon as the manifesto of a whole school of critical theology.

It matters little in Spinoza's eyes how we interpret miracles, provided we understand them in a pious sense; the only aim of religion is piety; we must ask from religion a rule of life, not metaphysics. The Scriptures, like all other revelations, are summed up in one precept, 'Love your neighbour.' The fruit of religion is beatitude; everybody shares it in proportion to his capacity and his efforts. Minds ruled by reason, philosophic minds, which even in this world live in God, are beyond the reach of death; what death deprives them of is worthless; but weak or passionate minds perish almost entirely, and death, instead of being a mere accident, goes to the very

root of their being. . . The ignorant man, swayed by blind passion, is agitated in a thousand ways by outward causes, and never enjoys true peace of mind; for him to cease to suffer is to cease to exist. The soul of the sage on the contrary can scarcely be disturbed. Having, by a kind of eternal necessity, the consciousness of himself, of God, and of the world, he never ceases to exist, and always preserves true peace of mind.

Spinoza could not bear people to consider his speculations irreligious or subversive. The timid Oldenburg admitted that some of his opinions were supposed to be dangerous. 'All that is consistent with reason,' answered Spinoza,' I believe to be helpful to the practice of virtue.' The alleged superiority of fixed ideas on religion and the future life found him intractable. 'Is it rejecting religion,' he asked, 'to acknowledge God as the supreme good, and to think that we ought to love Him as such with a free heart? To maintain that our freedom and happiness consist in that love; that the prize of virtue is virtue itself, and that a weak and blind mind finds its punishment in its blindness—is that abjuring religion?' The attacks on Spinoza were prompted, he thought, by very unworthy feelings. Those who inveighed against disinterested religion showed that they had no real love for reason and virtue, and were only prevented by fear from indulging all their passions. 'Thus,' he adds, 'they abstain from evil and do good reluctantly, like slaves, and as the

wages of their slavery they expect from God rewards which have infinitely more value in their eyes than the Divine love. The more unpleasant it is to them to be virtuous, the more they expect to be rewarded for it, and they fancy that all who are not restrained by the same fear as themselves live as they would like to do—that is to say, lawlessly.' It seemed to him unreasonable to expect to go to heaven for doing what was worthy of hell, and absurd to expect to please God by avowing that if we were not afraid of Him we should not love Him.

IV.

He saw the danger of interfering with beliefs in which few persons admit these subtle distinctions. *Caute* was his favourite maxim. His friends having made him understand that an explosion would follow the appearance of his 'Ethics,' he kept it unpublished until his death. He had no literary vanity, and did not court fame, perhaps because he was sure it would come to him unsought. He was perfectly happy; he has told us so, and we may take his word. And he has done even better; he has given us his secret. Listen, gentlemen, listen to the recipe of the 'prince of atheists' for securing happiness. It is to love God. To love God is to live in Him. Life in God is the best and the most perfect, because it is the most reasonable,

the happiest, the richest; in a word, because it gives us a fuller existence than any other life, and more completely satisfies our essential needs.

Spinoza's life was entirely regulated by these maxims. That life was a masterpiece of good sense and judgment. It was governed by the wisdom of the sage who only wants one thing, and always obtains it at last. No politician ever adapted means to ends more skilfully. Had he been less cautious, he would perhaps have incurred the same fate as the unfortunate Acosta. Loving truth for itself, he was indifferent to all the insults brought upon him by speaking it; he never replied a word to the attacks made upon him. He never attacked anyone. 'It is not my habit,' he used to say, 'to try to detect the errors of other people.' Had he wished to hold any office he would no doubt have been persecuted, or at least calumniated. He was nothing, and he wished to be nothing. 'Ama nesciri,' was his motto, as it was that of the author of the 'Imitation.' He sacrificed everything to his wish to be undisturbed in his meditations; and in this he was not selfish, for his thoughts were important to us all. He several times refused to be made rich, and was satisfied with the necessaries of life. The King of France offered him a pension: he declined it. The Elector Palatine offered him a Chair at Heidelberg: 'Your freedom will be complete,' he was told, 'for the prince is convinced that you will not

take advantage of it to disturb the established religion.' 'I do not quite understand,' he replied, 'how far the freedom of thought which you are so good as to promise me will be limited by the condition that the established religion is not to be disturbed; besides, my being engaged in teaching the young would be a bar to my own progress in philosophy. I have secured a quiet life only by giving up all public tuition.' He felt that his work was to think: he was indeed thinking for mankind, whose ideas he anticipated by more than a century.

He showed the same instinctive ability in all the relations of life; he knew that public opinion never allows a man two kinds of liberty at one time; being a freethinker, he considered himself bound to live as a saint. But I should not have said this. Was not that meek and pure life rather the direct expression of his untroubled conscience? Atheists used to be considered in those days as assassins armed with daggers. Spinoza was always gentle, humble, and pious. His opponents objected to this; they would have had him conform to the established type, and after living like an incarnate demon, come to a suitable end. Spinoza smiled at that curious demand, and refused to change his conduct to oblige his enemies.

He made excellent friends, was brave when necessary, and protested against popular outbreaks whenever he thought them unjust. Repeated disappointments did not shake his faith in the

republican party; his principles were not at the mercy of events. Perhaps what did him most honour was the sincere esteem and affection of the simple beings with whom he lived. The esteem of the humble is priceless, gentlemen; their judgment is nearly always that of God Himself. The worthy Van der Spyks evidently considered Spinoza an ideal lodger. 'No one ever gave less trouble,' they told Colerus, some years after his death. 'When at home he never interfered with anyone; most of his time he spent quietly in his room. When tired of study, he would come down and join in our conversation, even about trifles.' There never was a more agreeable neighbour. He often used to chat with his hostess, and also with the other lodgers, especially if they were ill or in trouble. He used to tell the children to go to divine service, and when they came back would ask what they could remember of the sermon. He nearly always endorsed the advice of the preacher. Among those whom he most esteemed was the pastor Cordes, an excellent man, who explained the Scriptures well. Spinoza sometimes went to hear him, and urged his host never to miss the preaching of so able a minister. One day his hostess asked him whether she might hope for salvation in the religion she professed. 'Your religion is good,' he replied; 'do not look for another, or doubt that you will be saved if you are good as well as pious.'

He was wonderfully self-denying and economical. He supplied his daily wants by the labour

of his hands, — by polishing spectacle-glasses, at which he was an adept. The Van der Spyks gave Colerus some scraps of paper on which he had put down his expenses; they amounted on an average to about twopence half-penny a day. He used to balance his accounts carefully every quarter, in order to spend neither more nor less than he had. His dress was simple, almost shabby, but his aspect and manner were tranquil and easy. He had evidently found a system which gave him perfect contentment.

He never was either sad or merry, and the evenness of his temper was marvellous. He perhaps felt some little disappointment when the daughter of his teacher Van den Ende preferred Kerkering to him, but I imagine that he soon consoled himself. 'Reason is my only enjoyment,' he said, 'and joy and peace is what I aim at in this life.' He never could bear to hear anyone commend sadness. 'It is superstition,' he said, 'that makes sadness a good and every source of joy an evil. God would be a spiteful being if He rejoiced in my weakness and suffering. The truth is that the greater joy we feel the greater perfection do we attain, the more fully do we partake of the divine nature. . . . Joy, then, can never be evil so long as it is in accordance with the true purpose of our existence. The virtuous life is not a sad and gloomy life, a life of privations and austerities. How could God take pleasure in the sight of my weakness, or reckon to my credit the tears, sobs, and terrors which are

the signs of a feeble soul? Yes,' he added vehemently, 'it is wise to use the good things of this life and enjoy them as much as possible, to recruit our strength moderately with pleasant food, to charm our senses with the colour and perfume of flowers, even to adorn our garments, to delight in music, games, spectacles, and every kind of innocent amusement.' People are always talking about repentance, humility, death; but repentance is not a virtue, it is the consequence of sin; humility is not a virtue either, since it arises from a consciousness of inferiority. As for the thought of death, it is the child of fear, and its favourite dwelling-place is a feeble mind. 'Of all things in the world,' he said, 'that on which a free man thinks least is death. Wisdom is meditation, not on death, but on life.'

V.

Since the time of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, there has been no life so profoundly penetrated with the sense of the divine as that of Spinoza. In the twelfth, the thirteenth, and the sixteenth centuries, rationalist philosophy boasted some very great men; but it had no saint. There was often something hard and repulsive in the finest characters among the leaders of Italian thought. There was no religion in those lives which rebelled against divine as well as human laws, and whose last example was poor Vanini. With

Spinoza, freedom of thought as a form of piety is the product of religion. Religion in his system is not merely a part of life, but life itself. What is important is not to acquire some more or less correct metaphysical phrase, but to give life a pole-star, a supreme direction, an ideal.

It was thus, gentlemen, that your illustrious countryman raised a standard capable, even now, of sheltering all who think and feel nobly. Yes, religion is eternal; it answers to the most pressing need of primitive as well as of cultured men; it can only perish with mankind itself, or rather its disappearance would prove that man had so degenerated as to be about to revert to the animal from which he sprang. And yet no dogma, no form of worship, no formula can in these days be adequate to the religious sentiment. These two apparently contradictory assertions must be maintained each against the other. Woe to those who pretend that religion has had its day! Woe to those who imagine that they can impart to symbols, which the world has outgrown, the authority they possessed when they were rooted in the unassailable dogmatism of the past! We must renounce that dogmatism now; we must renounce those fixed creeds which gave rise to so much strife and agony, but also to such ardent faith. We must renounce the idea that it depends on us to maintain in others beliefs which we no longer share. Spinoza did well to detest hypocrisy; hypocrisy is cowardly and dishonest;

but above all it is useless. The persistence of the higher classes in parading before the uneducated masses the religious rites of former days, can only have one result: it will destroy their authority in critical times, when it is of the first importance that there should be some men in whose wisdom and virtue the people can still confide.

Honour, then, to Spinoza, who dared to say: 'Reason before everything!' Reason cannot be contrary to the true interests of mankind. But let us remind the impatient and unreflecting, that to Spinoza religious revolutions were only a change of formulas. To him the substance remained the same though expressed in other terms. If, on the one hand, he energetically disclaimed the theocratic power of a priesthood distinct from civil society, and the tendency of the State to meddle with metaphysics, on the other hand, he never rejected either State or Religion. He wished the State to be tolerant, and Religion to be free. We ask no more for ourselves. We cannot impose on others beliefs which we do not hold. When the believers of other days persecuted, their action was tyrannical, but at least it was consistent: for us now-a-days to do as they did would be simply absurd. Our religion is a sentiment susceptible of taking many forms. These forms are far from being of equal value, yet none of them has power or authority to banish the others. Liberty was the last word of Spinoza's religious policy. Let it be the last word of ours! It is the most honest

course, and also perhaps the safest and most effectual for the progress of civilization.

Mankind certainly advances on the path of progress with very uneven steps. The rude and violent Esau grows impatient at the slow movements of Jacob's flock. We must give everything its time. We certainly must not allow prejudice and ignorance to shackle the free action of the mind; but on the other hand we must not hurry the slow progress of more sluggish spirits. Some must be free to be foolish in order that others may be free to be wise. Spiritual development cannot by assisted by force. It is natural enough that those who have no genuine care for truth should compel outward submission. But how can we, who believe that truth is something real and supremely valuable, dream of compelling an adhesion which is worthless when it is not the fruit of free conviction? We no longer admit sacramental formulas, acting of themselves independently of the state of mind of the person to whom they apply. To us a belief has no value unless the individual has won it by his own reflection, unless he has grasped and assimilated it. Conviction by word of command is as nonsensical as love taken by force or sympathy made to order. Let us bind ourselves, gentlemen, always to defend our own liberty, and also, if need be, to defend the liberty of those who did not always respect ours, and who, if they had the power, would probably not respect it now.

It was Holland, gentlemen, which, more than two hundred years ago, had the glory of demonstrating the feasibility of these theories by putting them into practice. 'Is it,' asked Spinoza, 'necessary to prove that freedom of thought has no bad results, but teaches men most widely divided in opinion to respect each other's rights? Instances abound, and we have not far to look for them. See Amsterdam, whose growth, admired by other nations, is the result of that freedom. Men of all countries and creeds live in perfect concord in that flourishing republic, that renowned city . . . and no sect, however odious, is refused protection by its magistrates, provided it does not trespass on the rights of others.' Descartes was of the same opinion when he sought in your country the tranquillity necessary for his studies. Thus, thanks to that noble privilege of freedom which your forefathers gloriously achieved, your Holland became the asylum where, shielded from the tyrannies which were devastating Europe, the spirit of man found air to breathe, a public to understand it, and organs through which to multiply its voice, which elsewhere was silenced.

Great, no doubt, are the sufferings of our century, and cruel its perplexities. It is never safe to raise so many problems before possessing the necessary elements for solving them. It was not we who shattered that aërial paradise whose crystal walls reflected silvery and azure rays which inspired and comforted so many longing eyes.

But it lies in ruins; what is broken is broken, and no thoughtful mind will undertake the idle task of bringing back the ignorance that has been dispelled or restoring the lost illusions. Almost everywhere the inhabitants of large towns have given up faith in the supernatural; even if we sacrificed our own convictions and our sincerity, we could not induce them to return to it. But the supernatural, as it was formerly understood, is not the ideal. The cause of the supernatural is lost. The cause of the ideal has suffered no reverse; it never will. The ideal is the soul of the world, the permanent God, the primordial, efficient and final cause of this universe. Here we have the foundation of the religion which can never die. We have no more need of miracles or selfish prayers to lead us to worship God than Spinoza had. So long as there is a fibre in the human heart to thrill in response to all that is just and honourable, so long as the soul that has the instinct of right prefers virtue to life, so long as there are friends of truth who will sacrifice repose to science; friends of the public good who will devote themselves to the useful and saintly works of mercy, womanly hearts to love all that is good and beautiful and pure, and artists to express it in inspired sounds, colours, and words, so long will God live in us. Only if selfishness, baseness of heart, narrowness of mind, indifference to science, contempt for the rights of man, forgetfulness of all that is grand and noble, were to dominate this

world, would God cease to dwell in man. But far from us be such thoughts. Our aspirations, our sufferings, even our faults and our rashness, are proofs that the ideal lives in us. Yes, human life is still divine. Our apparent negations are often but the scruples of timorous minds who fear to go beyond what they know. They are a more worthy tribute to the Deity than the hypocritical worship of the formalist. God is still in us, gentlemen; God is in us. *Est Deus in nobis.*

Let us all do homage, gentlemen, to the great and illustrious thinker who, two hundred years ago, showed as no else had shown, by the example of his life, and by the power of his writings, which time has not yet abated, that such thoughts abound in spiritual joy and holy unction. Let us with Schleiermacher offer the best we are capable of as an oblation to the manes of the saintly and misrepresented Spinoza. 'The sublime spirit of the universe had penetrated him; the infinite was his beginning and his end, the universal was the object of his one and lifelong passion. Living in holy innocence and profound humility, he saw in the imperishable world the reflection of himself, and knew that he also was a worthy mirror for the world; he was filled with religion, and filled with the Holy Ghost; he appears to us unique and unequalled, a master of his craft, but raised above the common level, without disciples and without the freedom of any city.'

That freedom you are about to confer upon him, gentlemen. The monument you raise to his memory will be the link uniting his genius and this earth. His soul will hover, like a tutelary genius, above the spot where he accomplished his short earthly pilgrimage. Woe to any passer-by who should insult that meek and thoughtful figure! He would be punished, as base minds always are, by his own baseness, and his inability to comprehend the divine. From his granite pedestal Spinoza will teach us all to follow the path which led him to happiness, and, centuries hence, men of culture, crossing the Pavilioen-gracht, will say to themselves: 'It is perhaps from this spot that God was most clearly seen.'

May the memory of this fête be to all of us a consolatory and a cherished recollection!

THE END.

BILLING AND SONS, PRINTERS, GUILDFORD.
G., C. & Co.

00066886

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 05 October, 2018